00111233

BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

Royal Asiatic Society.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS

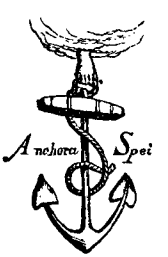
On Prominent Questions in Theology

EDITED BY

THE RIGHT REV. ALEXANDER EWING, D.C.L.
BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES

FIRST SERIES

111233



STRAHAN & CO., PUBLISHERS
56 LUDGATE HILL, LONDON
1871

LONDON:
PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO.,
CITY ROAD.

CONTENTS.

I. THE ATONEMENT. By the EDITOR.

II. THE EUCHARIST. By the EDITOR.

III. THE RULE OF FAITH. By the EDITOR.

IV. PRESENT UNBELIEF. By the EDITOR.

V. WORDS FOR THINGS. By the Rev. J. EWING.

VI. MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS CONCERNING THE CHURCH AND MANKIND. By the Rev. F. D. MAURICE.

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY

THE ATONEMENT

PREFACE.

IT is curious that Revelation should not be more regarded than it is in its primitive aspect, that is, as a *Revelation*, or giving of Light. It is too much forgotten that this is its main character and intent; that Revelation is something over and above nature, something to interpret and supplement nature, and to give us "that which by nature we cannot have." Instead of this, it is too frequently regarded as another mystery, to be received on account of the authority by which it is imposed, but not on the ground of that which it is in itself,—light illuminating darkness. So much is this the case, that one of the most illustrious apologists of Revelation grounds his arguments for its credibility on the fact of its containing mysteries *analogous* to those of nature.

Yet surely this is not the true conception of Revelation, nor the object for which it was bestowed? Surely its character and intents are different? Was it not given us to clear up mystery? to be a key to the difficulties of nature? to enlighten us? to be a help whereby we might be able "to bear the burden of the mystery . . . the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world?"

Doubtless it was so; and do we not frustrate its object, and lose its blessings when we do not receive it thus? If we do not recognise it in this character, we miss its end, and fall short of its blessings, and to this may probably be attributed the slow progress which Christianity has made.

Revelation is "the making manifest," by an admission of light; it is the Revelation of *meaning*, of a meaning capable of being understood, and which is required to be understood for the accomplishment of the ends for which Revelation was given; and which only are accomplished as it is understood. It is no additional mystery, but the explanation of mystery—an explanation commending itself to our conscience and reason, and operating by them. It is not sent to demand faith on authority, but to produce faith by explanation and by giving reasons for believing. If not received, in this sense, we miss the character and ends of Revelation. But how often is this done?

Materialistic substitutions and technical definitions have been made to travesty its meaning, and have been put into its place; and that which was given to lighten our darkness has been brought to require more light to illuminate itself, than the darkness to which it was sent! When light becomes darkness, how great is the darkness! and how doubly dark when Christ Himself becomes the cloud!

Finding nothing satisfactory in such conceptions of Revelation, and knowing that some of them are at variance with things which are sure, many turn from Revelation, thinking it to be in itself either insufficient or untrue, and to be but one of the many Religions which have appeared but to pass away. But this is a false conclusion, the product of a misapprehension, or misrepresentation of Revelation.

Revelation, if understood, gives us all we need;—in their essence its truths are absolute and eternal, and can never pass away, and as they are understood, are ever found ahead of human progress. Christ is "the heir of all the ages," and as He is recognised, so in proportion is the elevation of that time, and nation; its place and standing.

As is morality, so is progress; and as is light, so is morality; and as Love is, so light is; for as a man is, he sees; and as he sees he acts: but no man can have Eternal light and power but in the light of Christ. By His light only can we rise from temporal to eternal levels, to seek good, that is, not for a purpose, but for its own sake, and God, for that which He is. By Christ the true God is revealed to us; Christ, by giving us to know the Son, enables us to find the Father. By Christ we come into our true relations with God, into a place of liberty, that is, and obedience also; a place of rest; which has its security, not from that which is in us, but from that which is in God:—His everlasting and righteous Fatherhood.

By Christ we have "fellowship" with the Father, a reverent sympathy and adoration; and yet the meaning of God's will, by getting His character in Christ. Brought thus nigh to God, we find that no sacrifice in place of "fellowship," or sympathy, is sufficient, that nothing can be our true relationship with God which is short of this, and that all regarding of this as a hard necessity, is of the nature of selling that birthright into which we were born as "God's offspring," and to which it is the main object and meaning of Revelation to call us—but from which, alas, we had been, and now are, too often tempted by other and lower things.

It has appeared to some who apprehend Revelation in

this sense, that there are those who would be glad of assistance in receiving it under the same aspects.

Arrangements, accordingly, are being made whereby the works of some of those who look on Revelation in this light may be made easily accessible. Short treatises and papers are intended therefore to be issued from time to time, to form one, and a continuous, series, in monthly volumes.

These papers will be adapted for family reading, but are intended more particularly for the thoughtful and enquiring members of the family.

It is hoped that by means of this series, under God, some will be helped, in these days of change, to find *sure* standing in Christianity, and a foundation which neither the varying opinions of men, nor the difference of the organization of Churches, nor connection or disconnection with the Civil power, will be able to alter or to destroy.

WILLIAM LAW.

I. It is remarkable that at this day there remain only a few scanty and sometimes conflicting memorials of the life and character of a man whose writings for more than a century exercised a very perceptible influence upon the mind of the English Church; and whose letters to Hoadly may fairly be put on a level with the "Lettres Provinciales" of Blaise Pascal,—both displaying equal power, wit, and learning; both now consigned to a common oblivion. Yet such is the case with William Law, whose "Dialogue upon the Atonement" is reprinted in the present volume.

William Law was born at King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire, in the year 1686, where also—"the place of his nativity"—he died, and was buried in the year 1761. A monument (which still remains) was erected there to his memory "by a particular and dear friend, who had lived many years with him, and therefore had long known and highly and justly esteemed his singular worth."

After receiving the rudimental portion of his education in some provincial school, he was sent, in his nineteenth year, to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, of which society he

seems to have been elected a fellow in 1711. Refusing to take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration on the accession of George I. in 1714, he vacated his fellowship apparently in the year 1716, and thenceforward "was distinguished by the name of a nonjuring minister."

About this time he went to Putney as tutor to Edward Gibbon, the father of the historian of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." While discharging the duties of this office, he gave "voluntary tuition" to his pupil's sister, upon whose mind "his instructions made an early and lasting impression." A friendship thus begun was never afterwards interrupted. According to a letter attributed to the great historian,* in Hester Gibbon's house at King's Cliffe, Law spent somewhat more than the last twenty years of his life, having, in company with a mutual friend, Mrs. Hutcheson, removed thither from London in 1740, to act as chaplain, instructor, and almoner. When, where, and from whom he received holy orders—when and where, if ever, he officiated in the Church of England—these are points which it has not been possible to ascertain. The accounts state that he acted as curate "for some time" in London; but no definite authority has been given for the statement. There is no record in the registers of King's Cliffe of his ever having performed sacred offices in the church of his native village.†

* This letter may be found in a notice of Law prefixed to the 19th edition of "The Serious Call." London: 1825.

† This point has been cleared up through the kindness of the present Rector of King's Cliffe.

II. In private and domestic life, Law must have been very attractive and conciliatory. In spite of being an ecclesiastic, he conciliated much more than the respect of his friend Hester Gibbon's nephew. Unmarried, like the melancholy Cowper, like him also he was much attached to female society. He was a man of simple, abstemious, and retired habits; careless about money, for he refused to take payment for the copies of his publications;* munificent, or (as it would be phrased now) injudicious and indiscreet in almsgiving; fond of children, and "naturally inclined to be more merry than sad."

"He rose early, breakfasted in his bedroom, alone, on one cup of chocolate, joined his family in prayer at nine o'clock, and again soon after noon at dinner. When the children of his nephew came to his house, as they often did, he was much pleased to see them, and to take them on his knee. When the daily provision for the poor was not made punctually at the usual hour, he expressed his displeasure sharply, but seldom on any other occasion. He did not join Mrs. Gibbon and Mr. Hutcheson at the tea-table, but sometimes ate a few raisins standing while they sat. At an early supper, after an hour's walk, he ate something, and drank one or two glasses of wine; then joined in prayer with the ladies and their servants, attended to the reading of some portion of Scripture, and at nine o'clock retired."

III. Law's writings are numerous and varied. Some of

* It is said that his bookseller, Mr. Richardson, once prevailed upon him to accept one hundred guineas.

them are devotional; some are directed to, what, for the sake of distinction, may be called, Dogmatic Theology; and some are controversial. In controversy he selected men of no mean mark for his antagonists; for he entered into the lists with Hoadly, Warburton, John Wesley, and Chubb; and it is not too much to say that he was seldom, perhaps never, worsted in the fight. Of all his works, the best known at this day are the "Treatise on Christian Perfection," two editions of which were published in London in 1807, and his "masterpiece," "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," much recommended by Dr. Johnson as the "finest piece of hortatory theology in any language."* Of this book a nineteenth edition was published also in London in 1825.

Both these works were for a long period studied and circulated by the Evangelical section (such as it still is) of the English Church, and by the more devout and intelligent members of the High Church section, such as it was prior to the year 1834.

Bishop Horne (1730—1792), President of Magdalen College, Oxford, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, and author of the once celebrated "Commentary on the Psalms," was such a diligent student and devout admirer of the "Treatise on Christian Perfection," that he either copied, or was sufficiently conversant with it to quote from memory whole passages in his sermon on the "Duty of Self-Denial."† But

* See preface to the edition of the "Serious Call," published at York, 1815.

† Compare "Christian Perfection," p. 146, 8th edition, London, 1807, with Horne's Sermons. Ser. xxxiii. vol. i. 423. London, 1831.

great as was the popularity of the "Christian Perfection," its popularity was diminished on the publication of the "Serious Call," which made a still stronger, and certainly a more lasting, impression upon the sympathies of the religious world. Wonderful things are said of the influence which the "Call" has been known to exercise not only over individual minds, but even over the minds of an entire population. In a letter from Scarborough, dated December 21, 1771,* a clergyman, who signs himself *Ouranius*, states that he had been so charmed and edified by it, that he resolved to give a copy of it to each person in his parish—being desirous that his people should be fed with the same spiritual food which had so abundantly nurtured himself; and this effort for their good (he tells us) was rewarded with unusual success. "I had the satisfaction of seeing my people reclaimed from a life of folly and impiety to a life of holiness and devotion." Dr. Johnson† speaks of the "Serious Call" in terms so striking, that it is impossible to account for the language which he uses, merely from the fact of his known predilection for LAW'S nonjuring principles. He says, "I fell into an inattention to religion, or an indifference about it, in my ninth year. The church at Lichfield, in which we had a seat, wanted reparation, so I was to go and find a seat in other churches; and having bad eyes, and being awkward about this, I used to go and read in the fields on Sunday. This habit continued till my

* See Preface to 19th Ed., pp. xiii., xiv.

† Boswell's "Life of Johnson," p. 14, Tilt's Edition. London, 1840.

fourteenth year; and still I find a great reluctance to go to church. I then became a sort of lax *talker* against religion, for I did not much *think* against it; and this lasted till I went to Oxford,* where it would not be *suffered.* When at Oxford I took up Law's 'Serious Call to a Holy Life,' expecting to find it a dull book (as such books generally are), and to laugh at it; but I found Law quite an overmatch for me: and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest about religion after I became capable of rational inquiry." From this time forward (says his biographer) religion was the prominent object of his thoughts. So much for the influence of Law's writings over the mind of a man who believed in the divine right of kings, and thought it a compliment (after he had received a pension from George III.) to address a friend as a Jacobite.†

Now, turning from this high Tory and high churchman, it may not be uninteresting to mark how the mind of a man, cast in quite a different mould, was affected by the study of the "Serious Call,"—the elder Venn. We are told that he read it repeatedly, and with great advantage; and when

* He went to Oxford on the 31st October, 1728, being then in his nineteenth year, soon after the publication of the "Serious Call," in 1726, *apparently.*

† "'My dear, I hope you are a Jacobite?' Old Mr. Langton, who, though a high and steady Tory, was much attached to the present Royal Family, seemed offended, and asked, with great warmth, what he could mean by putting such a question. 'Why, sir,' said Johnson, 'I meant no offence, I meant a great compliment. A Jacobite believes in the Divine right of Kings. He that believes in the Divine right of Kings believes in a Divinity. A Jacobite believes in the Divine right of Bishops. He that believes in the Divine right of Bishops, believes in the Divine authority of the Christian Religion. Therefore, sir, a Jacobite is neither an Atheist, nor a Deist.'"—Cf. Boswell's "Johnson," p. 130. Tilt, London, 1840 [An. 1703].

"The Spirit of Love" (a portion of which is now presented to the public) was in the press he looked forward to its publication with intense anxiety. The bookseller, Mr. Richardson, was importuned to forward it without delay. "No miser, waiting for the account of a rich inheritance devolving on him, was ever more eager than Venn was to receive a book from which he expected to derive so much knowledge and improvement."* But the miser's experience was his. What he so eagerly coveted brought only disappointment. He either failed to appreciate, or else (as indeed is often the case now) he misunderstood Law's, that is, in other words, the Pauline, doctrine of reconciliation.

III. LAW'S theological system may be said to rest upon one only basis, viz., that GOD is LOVE—from eternity to eternity Love—"abyssal" Love—an infinite fathomless depth of never-ceasing Love—ordering all His counsels, working all His works, regulating all events, governing all creatures according to the rules and measures of Love alone; every sentiment antagonistic to Love being absolutely foreign to the divine nature, and existing not in the Creator, but in the creature.

And it may also be said (in so far as such a thing can be said of any human being) that no passion or temper antagonistic to Love found a place in William Law's character. A close reasoner, a keen disputant, at times rising up to a very high and noble eloquence (as witness his controversies with Hoadly and Warburton, and with the Deists), yet he

* Cf. "Life of Henry Venn," pp. 18, 19. London, 1839.

never indulges in personalities, or in the imputation of motives—never contends for victory, but only for truth—only for the glory of God and for the good of men; for the good of those with whom he argues. In fact he exemplified what Gibbon said of him, that he believed what he professed, and practised what he enjoined; and proved, indeed, that at every weapon of attack and defence, on the ground that was common to both, the nonjuror was at least equal prelate.

IV. At this day it is curious, and it may not be altogether useless, to cite some of the opinions, current in theological literature, in regard to this nonjuror and his writings.

The last editor * of his "Letters to Hoadly" characterizes them as incomparable for truth of argument, brightness of wit, purity of English; and speaks of Law as one of the great defenders of the cause of the Church. Again, Edward Gibbon † represents him as a worthy and pious man, who believed all he professed, and practised all he enjoined—as a wit and a scholar—in argument specious and acute, in manner lively, in style forcible and clear. "Had not his mind been clouded with enthusiasm, he might be ranked among the most agreeable and ingenious writers of the times. His precepts are rigid, but they are founded on the Gospel. His satire is sharp, but it is founded on a know-

* Apparently the last. See a Collection of Tracts called "The Scholar Armed." 3rd Ed. London, 1812.

† See letter cited *supra*, p. 10.

ledge of human life; and many of his portraits are not unworthy of the pen of a La Bruyère. If he finds a spark of piety in his reader's mind, he will soon kindle it into a flame; and a philosopher must admit that he exposes with equal severity and truth the strange contradiction between the faith and practice of the Christian world." This is one portrait—the bright portrait of the man, drawn by kind and friendly hands. We may now turn to a darker view of him—the work of less friendly artists.

Dr. Hey [1734—1815], "a sound and judicious" divine (as he is evermore called), in his "Lectures on Divinity," dismisses Law's name with scorn and contempt, as hardly worth mention, inasmuch as he is a mere "mystic."* One of the editors of "Christian Perfection" warns his readers against the danger of falling, by Mr. Law's example, "into the stupendous reveries of Jacob Boehmen, the German theosophist"† —the *blessed* Boehmen, as Law in later life loved to call him; while Alexander Knox‡ [1768—1831] becomes quite excited (as far as his feeble temperament was capable of excitement) at the thought of Law's "full-grown mysticism." Contrasting Law with Fénélon [1651—1715], much to the disparagement of the former, moved perhaps by Law's controversy with John Wesley about regeneration,—he says, "I should not wish to analyze the character of William Law. His temper first and last is of a questionable

* "Lectures," iii. 450. Cambridge, 1822.

† "Christian Perfection." London, 1807.

‡ "Remains," i. 340. Letter on Mysticism to Parken.

complexion."* 'When Knox wrote this, he might have remembered that Bossuet wrote and spoke of the saintly Fénélon in a somewhat similar spirit; and perhaps if he had proceeded to make the analysis from which he shrank, he might have formed a different judgment; or, at least, have expressed himself in different language. Even Knox might have learned something from the writings of those who are generally stigmatized as *Mystics*. Great and precious thoughts of God are stored up in the works of such men as François de Sales,† Fénélon, and Law, which are still worthy of attention. They contain truths which even *we* cannot afford to lose; but which are either forgotten or neglected in these hasty times: or else have been clipped by the rude shears of ecclesiastical definition into strange fantastic forms, like the box edges which disfigured the gardens of our forefathers. Be it granted, as indeed it *must* be granted, that errors are to be found in the speculations of such men; still we must admit that they moved along no ordinary groove, and soared far above the common level into an atmosphere purer and more sincere than that which most of us are in the habit of breathing; and we hope that that Divine faculty which can eliminate truth from error, and which, like the chemist's test, helps to detect and expel foreign matter held in solution, is not withdrawn from us, but will still enable us to separate the dross from the pure ore. Yes, it is to be hoped that

* "Remains," i. 373.

† Évêque et Prince de Genève [1567—1622].

this glory is not departed from this age of the Church! And if Mysticism, according to the definition of a modern writer,* be a system which examines religious phenomena simply as facts resulting from the immediate contact of God with the individual soul, we need not be at much pains to exonerate Law from the charge of it: nor will we presume to pass a panegyric upon a man who could thus express himself;—"I love no mysterious depths or heights of speculation, covet no knowledge, want to see no ground of Nature, Grace, and Creature, but so far as it brings me nearer to God, forces me to forget and renounce everything for Him, to do everything in Him and for Him, and to give every breathing, moving, stirring intention of my heart, soul, spirit, life to Him. It is for the sake of the spirit of prayer that I have endeavoured to set so many points of religion in such a view as must dispose the reader willingly to give up all that he inherits from his fallen father, to be all hunger and thirst for God, and to have no thought or care but to be wholly His devoted instrument everywhere, and in everything His adoring, joyful, and thankful servant."

* * *

* Reuss, "Théologie Chrétienne," i. 210. Strasbourg et Paris, 1860. "Le mysticisme considère les phénomènes religieux simplement comme des faits résultant du contact immédiat de la Divinité avec l'individu humain."

"There is nothing in this world so much concerns a man, as to settle his heart in a right apprehension of his God, which must be the ground of all his piety and devotion; without which all his pretences of Religion are so nothing worth, as that in them God is made our idol, and we the misworshippers of Him; without which, shortly, our whole life is misspent in error and ignorance, and ends in a miserable discomfort."—*Bishop Hall's Works*, v. 487. Oxford: 1863.

INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH the following Treatise on the Atonement, by Mr. Law, cannot be said to deal closely with the subject, nor with its higher and more distinctive features; yet, as it lays a good foundation for doing so, in its accurate discrimination of the relative positions of the Divine and Human natures, and their harmonization in the Atonement, it has been thought well to revive and to republish it (being now but little known), as some contribution towards that greater knowledge and study of the doctrine which has lately appeared among us; and as some clearance of the ground towards the reception of the belief that the Atonement can only be rightly understood by the light which is proper to itself. The form of dialogue in which Mr. Law's treatise is couched will probably be against its popularity with modern readers; at the same time, that form no doubt helps to bring out its points more clearly, and to add strength to its character. The weighty work of Dr. Campbell, in our own day, may be thought to leave little to be contributed to the elucidation of this doctrine; but the field is so large, and the various minds to be met so differently

constituted, that other and inferior labourers may not be without their use. Would that the subject were ever approached with the spirit and from the elevation of Dr. Campbell! The following considerations are but the contributions of a gleaner in the field, the echoes of the waggons which bear away the harvest. In looking at the subject of the Atonement, as it were, from without, and at the spectacle of the world and Christendom, may it not in the outset, however, be fairly asked, "Is it needful to understand this doctrine fully at all; for, if so, surely few will be saved?" To this we must reply, that salvation, is a thing of degree. One travelling with me asks, "Do you suppose that ploughman far off with his horses on the hill, that sailor in that ship upon the horizon will without doubt perish everlastingly if they do not know or believe the Athanasian Creed?" I can only answer that salvation like health is a matter of degree. The deep things of God do not lie on the surface; St. Paul speaks of "*his not having attained to or apprehended.*"

All the higher conditions of being are complex; our very sins are not known until we know God; and God is not the first thing we know. Salvation is a question of degree, of time, of search, of finding. Completion, not unity, is fulness. Nothing great lies on the surface; nothing complete is the work of one blow. It is so in earthly things. The music of Handel, the painting of Raphael, the discoveries of Newton, are the results of many complex acts, not of one single or simple act. It is so in heavenly things. The angel of the Lord is revealed as what He is, only by struggle

and wrestling. Divine knowledge is a thing of time and degree; the beginning may be, but the result is not, contained in a name or given by a definition. It is the acquisition of a life and nature growing out of and enlightening the old. Jacob halts upon his thigh, but he attains the light of God. In the same way the doctrine of the Atonement does not lie on the surface, it is apprehended by degrees, its meaning becomes ours as we attain a new nature —a nature, indeed, of which it is the efficient, but which we cannot fully describe until we have its effect. It cannot be described or apprehended by a formula. It loses its meaning and its power when thus confined, and is changed to something else, to something which is not the Atonement, and often subversive of it. The crude and dogmatic way in which this doctrine has been formularized, not only by the scholastic divines, but also by the Reformers, is probably the main cause of the difficulty which has gathered round the subject. Their definitions have obscured the simplicity of Christ; and by introducing human measures of value and of quantity, have hindered the elementary light of revelation from being seen. By this means, the form wherein Christ came to make atonement has often been taken for the Atonement itself, and that which He came to do away, for the thing which He came to do. He came to reveal the character of God; to manifest that which God is, to declare His will, and to show to us that that which He came to enjoin, He himself is; that we are to do what He does; and that this is what He does, that He over-

comes evil by good, puts away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; accepts freely, offers freely, trusting to the principles of Love to achieve the fruits of Love.

This simplicity has been too little regarded in the attempts which have been made to set forth the Atonement in technical terms. These have seldom done more than to obscure the simplicity which is in Christ, and to convey a meaning which is either so inadequate or false as to be received but conventionally or not at all. A curious example of the first occurred in so high a quarter as in the late Encyclical of Lambeth, where the Atonement is described in terms which, if not accepted as conventional, could not have been accepted at all. The formula no doubt was taken from the Articles; but, apart from its context, it gives another and improper meaning, if strictly taken: for of a similar formula the late Dr. John Mason Neale (than whom no abler or more unprejudiced judge could be found), in his edition of the Oriental Liturgies, speaks as follows:—

"Notice here, and again presently, this unscriptural phrase. According to St. Paul's teaching, it is man that must be reconciled to God, not God to man. This appears to me a good argument in favour of the belief that St. Clement's Liturgy was never employed by any Church. Such an error might easily escape the notice of an individual writer, but the marvellous theological accuracy of early liturgies would not have allowed the phrase to remain in use." On this possibility of an erroneous interpretation being afterwards pointed out, it was called "a microscopic criticism," show-

ing how altogether conventionally such definitions come to be received. We cannot suppose them in this case to have been formally accepted as correct.

By the use of formulæ, which probably never in themselves adequately expressed that which they were intended to convey, but which in their inadequacy have been adopted, those who do not recognise light by them, are turned from the light. Those who apprehend the light of Christ should be on their guard against formulæ, and against a confusion of the defence of formulæ with the defence of the faith itself. Walking in the light of Christ, as Christ walked in the light of the Father, is alone that which is sufficient for us—no formula which does not embody the life of Christ is sufficient for us, and no formula can do this.

The confusion of thought on the subject of the Atonement has partly arisen from a difference of opinion as to the object of the Incarnation; whether it was to accomplish something out of our sight which we could not and need not fathom, but by accepting which we are saved; or whether it is to accomplish a purpose in our sight, by the view and apprehension of which it is that we are saved. All Christians agree that an intervention in behalf of humanity has taken place in Christ, the difference of opinion lies in the mode by which the benefit is supposed to be conveyed.

But the practical aspect of the Atonement, and that which has been its power of salvation to both parties, lies in the recognition by both, that the initiation and object of the Atonement are with God and for our good, and this,

whether its nature is fully understood or not. Yet on consideration it will be seen, although at first sight it may not appear so, that both parties in this case—those who more fully and those who less fully understand the nature of the Atonement—are equally saved by the same process; that is by the light which is in the Atonement, and that they who recognise it as light, are those alone who are in the true way, and are able accordingly to advance to perfection. For salvation, in any true sense, can only be the product of a justifiable confidence towards God, and this alone can be ours through a right apprehension of Christ's Atonement; and to give this must have been one object of the Atonement. Supposing true confidence towards God in those who accepted the Atonement irrespective of its light; it is plain on examination, that although it may have been without consciousness on their part, yet it was by an apprehension of the light which is in the Atonement that they had their confidence. Without this, on what would their confidence have rested? They recognised an interposition on their behalf on the part of God, an interposition attended in Him with infinite suffering and sorrow (which is the expression of that which was eternally in the divine mind as to sinful man), and they were healed thereby. So far as they saw it, that is, they were healed; the more they saw it, the more would their salvation have made progress. It was the light which saved them. The confidence they attained was only warranted by the Atonement; it was by what they saw in it they had their confidence, to whatever

extent they had it. We must come to the conclusion, therefore, that the Atonement is not a mystery which we are to receive because of its being warranted by other things; but that it is, on the contrary, that by which they are warranted. The Atonement is the key to our knowledge of God, and the reason for our faith in Him; it is not the intervention of mystery, which is to be held on authority, against reason. It is the breaking of the cloud, not a darker gloom over the face of nature; a rending of the veil, not a letting of it down; a telescope to bring God nigh, not, by the reversal of it, to remove Him farther from us. As Revelation is light, so the Atonement is the light of Revelation, its acme and centre, that to which all the rays converge, and from which they issue. As the life of Christ is the light of men, so the Atonement is the light of the life of Christ. The effective power of the Atonement is just in proportion as this light is recognised. That the Atonement has not been looked upon in this sense is the main reason why it has been so inoperative, and why, consequently, Christianity itself has been so; for the Atonement is the life of Christianity, and Christianity is lightened by its light. Why this misconception and darkness have been permitted is one of those mysterious facts, of which so many surround us, both in the kingdom of nature and of grace, and for which our reason gives no explanation. Why the Infinite Love which dictates the gift *seems* to stop short at its application, why it occurs so late in time, these, as so many other things, we know not, and must wait to know. Yet our natural instincts

and the Holy Spirit equally teach us that such delay is not in accordance with the will, because it is not in accordance with the nature, of God. But whatever may have been the reason, the mode in which the operation of the Atonement has been set aside is doubtless because it has not been recognised as light, and from its light having been perverted. The carnality of man's spirit seems ever to move in this direction—even in the case of the apostles, at their Lord's teaching, we see it wear this carnal aspect; and Churches, following in their wake, have likewise converted heavenly into earthly likenesses, and especially has this been the case with the Atonement. And not only has the Church of Rome done this, but, although in a different way, many of the Reformers also.

The first general effect of this carnal spirit has been to draw down the attitude of God's love, in the action of the Atonement, from a free impulse on His part, into one, which, if not induced, is yet warranted by some compensation supposed to be offered by His Son, by His accepting and receiving a punishment, in consideration of which sinners are passed by. There is no doubt enough in the external aspect of the Atonement in this conception to account for its being accepted as a true description, and it has an easy acceptance by the carnal mind; and in point of fact it has been very generally received as a true account. And not only has it been received by the lower or carnal mind, but by many who by means of this interpretation have eventually attained to the spirit and power of the Atonement. Yet its

defects are great, so great in fact, that strictly speaking they amount to a perversion of the principle of the Atonement; and in its strictness to the carnal mind alone can it commend itself. For it is to it that the conception that punishment appertains to transgression is a more obvious truth, than that punishment is an abnormal thing itself; it is that mind which accepts the Atonement as an equivalent for transgression, it is it which confounds the mode of conveying the divine love for the object which the divine love had in view. The Atonement cannot be accepted in this sense; in no way can it be accepted as providing for transgression but by making an end of it. Christ's coming for us men and our salvation was no doubt to seek and to save the lost; to seek and save the lost in that in which they were lost, and to seek so that that which was lost might be found. In the light and might of this Eternal Spirit (which is the spirit of Eternal Love), for the joy set before Him, and in compassion for His suffering creatures, He entered into humanity. He suffered and died for them. It was the will of God, the dictate of the eternal Nature. He could not but have acted thus. He did this in the way wherein it best could be done. He sought that which was lost where it was lost. He descended into the fallen flesh, yet without sin. *He Himself*, we read, *took part in the same.* He did this to raise and to regenerate it by the indwelling of His Eternal and Holy Spirit. Eternal Love and wisdom were His guides. As he who allies himself with a wicked brother to save that brother, without saving himself, yet bears his sins and carries his

sorrows until by his stripes he is healed, so did Christ. He did so, and he saw of the travail of His soul, and in this had His reward. He had the object of His act in his wicked brother turning from his wickedness and laying himself a willing offering at His feet. This was Christ's reward. He bore the iniquities of sinners, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. It was a sacrifice—a sacrifice well pleasing unto God; an offering calling forth the words, *This is my beloved Son;* a ransom, and a price, yet no equivalent, no compensation for sin. In plucking the brand from the burning, Christ felt the fire; and its marks became the power of His salvation: but they are not to be regarded as payment unto God. Such payment, if it would draw men near to the person of Christ, would remove them farther off from God, and God and Christ are One. A bargain has no relation to love; but Christ's wounds are the outgoing of God's love, the pledge of its reality, the gauge of its depth, not equivalents for sin.

In the Atonement of Jesus, looked at as it is in itself, there is no trace of payment; seen by its own light, we behold the Eternal Son carrying out in the way most meet an act of grace which, from the nature of things and of God, could be nothing other, and nothing less than it was.

If the question of value enters, or the idea of price presents itself, it has no inherent or real place in the nature of the Atonement, being it was neither the object of the interposition nor the condition of the forgiveness: but the

question of value solely grows out of the means whereby the Atonement was made, and is, as it were, incidentally connected with it, from the infinite nature of Him by whom the Atonement was made. But the moving cause of the Atonement was the justice and pity of God, and its end the rectification of the creature. So far from payment being the end of the Atonement, or an inherent portion of it, when we contemplate the divine Nature, we recognise that the Atonement is but the divine Nature acting according to its own laws; that while we ourselves indeed deserved nothing, God could not have acted otherwise than as He did; a conclusion which, if it involves no desert on our part, and puts aside the profane idea of merit on the part of God, leaves Him higher than if He had (were it possible for Him) done what He did for any other reasons than those for which He did it; *i.e.* because it was needed, because it was just—leaving Him in so doing in unapproachable sacredness and tenderness, far above that which any other conception could have given of Him.

If justification is required for God in making the Atonement, it is to be found in our needs,—and in His own nature; in our need and the necessity in the divine nature for righteousness. He had to make us righteous. And that which will satisfy imperfection will not satisfy perfection. A magistrate may accept punishment as the end of the matter; a Father can only accept or be satisfied with righteousness. And God is a Father. If we who are but earthly parents feel the need of righteousness for our children, how much

more a Heavenly? If an earthly workman has no pleasure in his work, save in its well-being, how much more the Great Architect of all? If our guilt precludes desert, it but evokes pity. It is the fact of these things being so which caused the Atonement, it is the knowledge of this which gives it its power over us. "*God commends His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly.*" It is the initiatory, unbought, and undeserved love of God for us which is the commendation of His acts. While yet it is true that God being such as He is, He could not but act according to His own nature. Does this impair the holiness of God, or make us less likely to do His will? Nay, where grace abounds, God's law is most established.

The introduction of the conception of merit has gone far to obscure the meaning of the Atonement. In this a system of definition, as in other things, has changed the pure outgoings of love into a conception of debtor and creditor, and even of supererogatory payment. The conception of merit in any shape in regard to work is erroneous. There is either a duty, or there is not,—a right, or there is not; anything less than Duty is inadmissible as anything more is absurd, and a surplus of righteousness cannot exist. The relations of duty are those of labour, of seed and crop. Of course there is fitness. An officer, distinguishing himself in one thing, is probably more fit for another and higher. Like produces like, and has in it of the nature of growth; but no officer, however distinguished for his work, did more than he ought. We have been led astray in this, as in

so many other things, first, by an untrue humility, which would save itself from thought by substituting as the end of Christ's Atonement a personal attachment and gratitude to Himself, and then by a false view of righteousness. There is an antinomianism which prefers resting on gratitude and a payment to entering into and having conformity with the righteous mind of Christ. We owe much of this to the natural aberrations of man, and to the doctrines of merit which the Church of Rome laid down: but we owe also much of it to the mistaken attitude of the Reformers, who, to escape the doctrine of self-righteousness, imagined a payment and "merit" on the part of Christ inconsistent with the divine attributes, and destructive of the unmercenary character of the Atonement. Of this the "for Christ's sake" of so many of our collects, substituted for the "in Christ" of the Original, is the result, and a vast amount of false and popular divinity arising out of it.

We need not here enter into the fact of law being allowed to work out its own sanctions, notwithstanding the love of God. He who knows what love is, will know that Law is love, and that no alteration of Law would be love, but the reverse. The root of all law is love, and its operation must therefore be love also. It is probable, however, that we may distinguish between natural and penal death; at least some such distinction appears to be drawn in Rom. v. 14.

The Eternal Son is the medium by which the approach to man is made on the part of God, and that whereby it is made to God on the part of man. Christ's Incarnation is the

means whereby we were brought to God, and God to us. His life, death, and resurrection are the way of our salvation. Christ did not make that which was not before in God, He brought that on us which was in God before; He did not make us that which we were not, He but made it operative. Being sons, He sent the spirit of sons into our hearts, begetting us again by a vision of our true Father, and putting away sin in us by the revelation through sacrifice of Himself.

The *prospective* aspect of the Atonement, as lucidly discriminated by Dr. Campbell, is that which requires most consideration on our part; the *retrospective* less so, being but incidentally connected with it in its relations of value, assuming and retaining its place naturally, and requiring no exertion on our part. But with the prospective it is different, for that action of the Atonement must be taken up and participated in by us. This operates to its end by the light which it contains. That end is our fellowship with God, and the agency towards our attaining that end is the light which we have of Christ. Christ's life is the light of men. He is the revelation of God, His mind is made known and commended to us in Christ, that we may have fellowship with it. The "*fellowship one with another*" spoken of by St. John is the fellowship of God and man through knowledge given in Christ. It comes to us by Christ, by the light of Christ being taken in by us: so by light we become one light. It is the result of knowledge of revelation. "*The Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding,*

that we may know Him that is true." This is the way. By the Son we have the Father; and getting our place as sons, all our relationships in life are altered. The law is no longer a taskmaster, it is transfigured into a guide; no longer a governor, but a deliverer; the elements of the world are no longer a body of death, but the alphabet of a new and eternal life and learning.

The Atonement must be regarded as one whole and continued act on the part of God, a manifestation in time of the eternal action of the divine Nature, operating as is required, where required. We cannot divide it into parts, it is one and indivisible. When we do so we can only do as when we map the globe into parts for convenience and our better apprehension. If the action of God in the Atonement seems to us abnormal and exceptional, it must be by our misapprehension of it. Any interpretation of God's ways which has this meaning must be false in the nature of things. God is one, and acts ever in unison with Himself. His purposes and will are eternal. If these are revealed at one time more than at another, it is because the revelation is then more required. That interpretation of the Atonement which considers it an exceptional act on the part of God by which, through doing one thing in the divine nature, he liberates Himself to do another thing, must be false, as dismembering the divine attributes, and communicating that, the knowledge of which need not have gone beyond the divine Being: for if communicated to man it could not have been for his satisfac-

tion. What was done, was for man, and that it should by man be understood. We must look for the true meaning of the Atonement in that which constitutes the substance of the divine Nature, and in some object sufficient for its exercise. The substance of the divine Nature is Love, and man is here its object. No end which has self for its object can be an end with the divine Nature, no physical result can be the conclusion to which the moral and spiritual phenomena which surround us point. Physical are subordinate to moral phenomena. The divine ends must be sought for in the highest regions. From that within ourselves we not only know that God Himself is that which He must be; but also that He is not less than ourselves. He does not give us the power of condemning Himself. He must be that which we are in our highest region, only in an infinitely greater and higher degree. And what that is we know, unless we deny all intelligence and all morality. By that which is most high within ourselves we reach on to *The* Most High; and come to know that, as nothing short of moral and spiritual perfection would satisfy us, neither can it satisfy Him; and that this therefore is the end which God has in view—a high moral and spiritual end for man. This is accomplished by the Ministry, by the physical elements and moral laws. No physical end, no end apart from what God is, no end for Himself apart from His eternal nature, no end but one which Love recognises as the highest and best can be the real, as it is not a sufficiently worthy end for God's creation.

If it be so, the meaning and character of the Atonement must be interpreted by this.

That God is Love commends itself both to our reason and experience; no other nature is consistent with itself, or self-sufficient. By this light, we can find our way, not only to the meaning of the Atonement, but its being so is the only adequate explanation of an atonement having been made. The spectacle of the world where two wills seem to contend, the confusions in our own souls, read by this light, are harmonized; the voice within protests against confusion and violation of law being put on the same level with the origin of Law and Creation, and prophesies a worthy end. We know that the root of Law is love, that eventually Law must reign; that the Lord our God is one Lord, and that there is none other but He.

In looking at the various aspects of the interposition of God in Christ, designated by the words Atonement and Incarnation, it would not be sufficient were we to omit the aspect which may be attached to it in our days, and to which the discoveries of science may give rise, by the exhibition of nature as a development in many of its forms, from lower to higher stages, viz., that the Atonement was not so much an interposition by way of obstacle to prevent descent, as an efficient to produce elevation. Science places the golden age of man in the future, and looks on his present state as one of progress rather than of decay—as one of development, and not of decadence. Christ in this sense would be considered as the infusion of a new

life, a graft of a higher kind, to produce a higher order of life. And no doubt there are some aspects of truth in this conception, and we too think that the golden age of man is in the future; but this conception does not correspond with the facts of Christ's life, nor with the experience which we have of the needs of humanity. The appeals which the Atonement makes are also, we think, destructive of this idea; for the Atonement both appeals to something in the past of which it is the result and remedy, and demands the operation of an intelligence of which the working is by the experience of that which is significant of a fall. Finally, the Atonement attains its ends *rationaliter*, and not *per se*: that is, not apart from the co-operation of the human understanding. The benefits of the Atonement are ours, in proportion as we intelligently apprehend, and, by apprehending, co-operate in sympathy with God in that which He does or forbids. It effects, and was intended to effect, its purposes by the light which is in it. It cannot convey its benefits to us in some mysterious manner unknown to us, it does not operate on us in the regions of distance and darkness. We cannot divide between the Atonement and that "fellowship" with God to which it is the way, and which was its end. We cannot lay it on the altar, as a thing *per se*, and say unto God, *It is* Corban; *be thou satisfied.* It requires the co-operation of our understanding and reason; through them, it appeals to something within us which is evidence of a higher life, and of a fall—and not only of a higher future,

but a higher past—to faculties abused, to a sense of guilt, to a fear of punishment, to an Unknown God, who is yet not unknown. The deeper aspects of Christ's Atonement testify that they are a rectification as well as a provision, a cure as well as an entrance to life. The theory of development will not only not fit in with the deeper aspects of the Atonement, but it must necessarily be ignorant of its higher aspects, which, although the saddest, are yet its most precious and elevating portions. It is possible to conceive that the descent of a higher and purer intelligence into the ranks of lower and impure would exhibit some of the conditions experienced by Jesus. We could understand one always accustomed to *see the face of His Father in heaven*—with the freedom *wherewith a son is free*—being *sore troubled*, and *straitened*, as Christ was; yea, even when the darkness was such as that from the sixth to the ninth hour, when Jesus cried, *My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?*—that he should feel and express himself in somewhat of a similar way. But the interposition of the Son of God was not only different in degree from this, but in kind; and not only from His higher nature, but from the objects which He had in view, and His manner of accomplishing them. For that which He did not only reveals what He did, but why He did it. By that light we see that which sin is—sin as it is to the mind of God—and that which love is—love as existing in and affecting the mind of God. The acts and words of Christ reveal that there are other and greater

things than evolution or development. The life of faith which the Son of God gives us to know does not take for granted that the moral state in which we find ourselves is according to the will of God;—it leaves the inference that it is not according to the will of God, while also in some sense it must be—it shows us that if God is to liberate other wills than His own, things must be as they are, and that being so, the Son of God has applied Himself to restore, establish, and at the same time elevate a creation which can progress only by antagonism. In Christ we see more than the anguish whereby a man is born into the world. We see a life coming through death, the corn of wheat falling to rise again, and bringing others with it. There is a voluntary subjection, a suffering which the Sinless only could suffer, and which He suffers just in proportion to His purity. Without attributing to His suffering anything like an equivalent to justice, or a substitution for sinners receiving the penal judgments which accompany sin, there is yet a recognition throughout that sin should suffer, that aberration from law should meet with punishment, that this has taken place and is being carried out, and that the Righteous Lord is righteous in judging thus, and in entering into and receiving its judgments. Going into the disorganized machine of humanity to rectify and improve it, we see all the storms and waves and results of that disorganization go over Him. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die,* is an eternal, He deems it, a needful and righteous sentence, and submits to it. He mourns the loss of many; He goes to repair it; He does

it by bringing in another life. He is the well-beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased in doing this. Acting for others, He makes his soul an offering for sin. He enters into the condition of death, into the hiding of the Father's face. In all things He is made like unto his brethren. Whether that which is to man the greatest loss and trial—to be as if there were no God, to have the heavens silent and dark—whether that too was His, we cannot say. But whatever is the acme of suffering for sin, He the Sinless accepted. Doubtless the sweat of great drops of blood, the prayer, *My Father, if it be possible, take this cup from me; Save me from this hour, but for this cause came I to this hour; My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* were at some point such as this. He subjected Himself voluntarily to the laws of transgression—whatever they were—that He might free those tied and bound. But it was no bargain, the value was incidental to the dignity of the offerer. But His offering was not made or accepted because of its greatness, or because thereby the law was discharged, but because it was the fitting thing, the thing required to put away sin, even the sacrifice of God Himself. And how was sin put away? By lifting men into a region where violation of law is ended, by giving man a will to the law; by drawing men to God; by making sin abhorrent, and God the Chosen. Through faith in the shedding of His blood He opened the door of an everlasting life, and the same Door becomes the Way of Life to all who follow in His path. His life was the

subjection to, and taking up the broken parts of a lost humanity, not the development only of a higher life.

There is much light thrown upon the doctrine of the Atonement by recognising its meaning to be in the sense of *reconciliation*, its sense in St. Paul's Epistles, and its meaning in England at the time of the translation of the Scriptures there. A good example of this having been its sense at that time, occurs in regard to a question altogether unconnected with religion, and which may therefore be regarded without prejudice on the subject, in a letter of King Edward, in which he says, "Where my good brother doth offer his travail with the spending of his treasure for the *atoning* of the French King with me, I do give him my hearty thanks,"* where Reconciliation is no doubt the sense of the word. And no doubt this is its highest and true sense, for although it may not contain any reference to that aspect of the Atonement which is called rectoral justice or to sacrifice as a pre-requisite or condition of forgiveness; Eternal Law provides for its own fulfilment: and reconciliation which secures that requires no going back upon old conditions. All such ideas are but conceptions of our lower nature, demanding a vindication of the gods beyond the fulfilment of their law. Our views of truth too often are taken from the rites of Barbarians. To the heathen the gods are but terrible, and Law is regarded as prohibitory or avenging, and sacrifice is offered as a compensation. As light arises, the gods cease

* Moryson to the Council, MSS., Germany, State Paper Office, quoted in Froude's "Hist. of England," vol. v. p. 484.

to become objects of terror, and Law is seen as a guide; as light increases the Godhead is recognised as love; and the laws of God are recognised as reflections of Himself—His calls to duty to be that which He Himself is. In this sense sacrifice as a compensation becomes impossible either to be received by Him, or offered by us. Nothing is possible but unity; a unity which demands no compensation and could not receive it, and in which present union effaces the aberrations of the past. In the case of our own children we feel that the law is honoured sufficiently by their cessation from rebellion, the barrier between us and them is removed by the words, *I will arise and go unto my Father*, and that an offering or compensation for their sins, so far from pleasing, would offend and alienate us, and that we require nothing to be done by ourselves to warrant our acceptance of them. Joy and praise are all that can have praise on either side. *My son was dead and is alive again*, on the one; and *make me as one of thy hired servants*, on the other; *joy in the presence of the angels of God* above; self-condemnation first, then praise below; not praise, however, because payment has been made, but because there can be no payment.

The retrospective aspect of the Atonement, as Dr. Campbell happily designates its Godward aspects, and the baptism of infants are crucial points of doctrine; but in the one case, as in the other, they can only be misconceived when the Atonement and Baptism, instead of being regarded as indicative of the eternal nature and true position of

God and man, and as pledges of them, are supposed to indicate something having occurred in the divine nature, in virtue of which we are accepted. The change is one which takes place in us, and not in God: a change which is the result of our apprehension of His unchangeableness—in His being ever Father and ever righteous.

The words "pardon" and "forgiveness of sins" in which we profess to believe ought to save us from errors in the direction of equivalents. *The old man and his deeds* are to be dismissed, healthy is to drive out the diseased blood. Without the shedding of the blood there is no remission; that is, of the fruits of sin there never is. But our new state is not the consequence of an independence—ours in virtue of the payment of another, but the entrance of a new nature coming into us through our apprehension of the unbought love of God reaching down to us in the Incarnation.

The difficulties which have gathered about the doctrine of the Atonement have arisen mainly from the absence of love in the human heart. Forgiveness on God's part is considered less probable than punishment; or else it is confounded with that vague amiability which is not love. There is forgiveness with God—free forgiveness; but it infers as its consequence the acquisition of righteousness. There is forgiveness with God—but it is that He may be feared. He forgives, but by no means clears, the guilty: the consequences of sin are never dismissed, while sin reigns death reigns. Christ brings in a new life through death; but death, the wages, is paid while sin continues. It is forgive-

ness, but it makes prominent suffering as a requisite for healing. Divine love, in giving birth to *being*, contemplates its well-being, and to accomplish this it does what is required, giving punishment and cordial as is meet. So do all who love, so do we for those we love, we are only satisfied with their rectitude. In giving birth to moral beings, God knew they must be made good by their own choosing. He makes them, He gives a choice, He educates them by choosing, by giving them to reap of the fruits they sow. He who dwelleth in love knows that it must be so. He who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God. He knows what God is, and what God will do; and He knows this just in proportion as he dwells in love. Such an one, therefore, knows what the Atonement is, and what it must be. To such definitions are unnecessary, and to others they are unprofitable. Let us look to this as our great source of interpretation. Looking at the life of Christ we get this love. In His Spirit we have *an unction from the Holy One and know all things.*

O THOU who camest full of love, and sufferedst, and wast rejected; from whom the Father turned away His face, while Thou wast doing that which was agreeable to His will,—a suffering and rejection real on either side: but a tremendous necessity,—needful if so be that Thou wouldst go among the wheels of a disordered creation to bring it into unison:—who wast indeed what Thou art, before thus doing, but art now become doubly what Thou wert; who couldst not have acted thus if Thou hadst not been what

Thou art; and being so could not but so have acted—King of Glory, yet the same, who art but what Thou wert, and ever shall be, from eternity to eternity. O ETERNAL ROSE, whose odour scents the universe! Thy bruising brought forth the odour, Thy breaking gives us Light and Life eternal. AMEN.

THE ATONEMENT.*

* * * [We are to consider] the doctrine of Scripture concerning the Atonement necessary to be made by the life, sufferings, and death of Christ; or, in other words, the true meaning of that righteousness or justice of God that must have satisfaction done to it before man can be reconciled to God.

For this doctrine is thought by some to favour the opinion of a wrath and resentment in the Deity itself.

Theophilus. This doctrine, Eusebius, of the Atonement made by Christ, and the absolute necessity and real efficacy of it to satisfy the righteousness or justice of God is the very ground and foundation of Christian Redemption, and the life and strength of every part of it. But, then, this very doctrine is so far from favouring the opinion of a wrath in the Deity itself, that it is an absolute full denial of it, and the strongest of demonstrations that the wrath, or resentment, that is to be pacified or atoned cannot possibly be in the Deity itself.

For this wrath that is to be atoned and pacified is, in its

* This reprint of the Second Dialogue in Law's "Spirit of Love," is taken from the third edition of that work, published in 1776.

whole nature, nothing else but Sin, or disorder in the creature; and when sin is extinguished in the creature, all the wrath that is between God and the creature is fully atoned. Search all the Bible from one end to the other, and you will find that the Atonement of that which is called the divine wrath or justice, and the extinguishing of sin in the creature, are only different expressions for one and the same individual thing; and therefore, unless you will place sin in God, that wrath that is to be atoned or pacified cannot be placed in Him.

The whole nature of our redemption has no other end but to remove or extinguish the wrath that is between God and man. When this is removed, man is reconciled to God. Therefore, where the wrath is, or where that is which wants to be atoned, there is that which is the blameable cause of the separation between God and man; there is that which Christ came into the world to extinguish, to quench, or atone. If therefore this wrath, which is the blameable cause of the separation between God and man, is in God himself; if Christ died to atone, or extinguish a wrath that was got into the holy Deity itself; then it must be said, that Christ made an atonement for God, and not for man; that He died for the good and benefit of God, and not of man; and that which is called our redemption ought rather to be called the redemption of God, as saving and delivering Him, and not man, from His own wrath.

This blasphemy is unavoidable, if you suppose that wrath, for which Christ died, to be a wrath in God himself.

Again, the very nature of atonement absolutely shows, that that which is to be atoned cannot possibly be in God, nor even in any good being: for atonement implies the alteration or removal of something that is not as it ought to be. And therefore every creature, so long as it is good, and has its proper state of goodness, neither wants, nor can admit of any atonement, because it has nothing in it that wants to be altered or taken out of it. And therefore atonement cannot possibly have any place in God, because nothing in God either wants, or can receive alteration; neither can it have place in any creature, but so far as it has lost or altered that which it had from God, and is fallen into disorder; and then, that which brings this creature back to its first state, which alters that which is wrong in it, and takes its evil out of it, is its true and proper atonement.

Water is the proper atonement of the rage of fire; and that which changes a tempest into a calm is its true atonement. And, therefore, as sure as Christ is a propitiation and an Atonement, so sure is it that that which He does as a propitiation and Atonement can have no place but in altering that evil and disorder which, in the state and life of the fallen creature, wants to be altered.

Suppose the creature not fallen, and then there is no room nor possibility for atonement; a plain and full proof that the work of atonement is nothing else but the altering or quenching that which is evil in the fallen creature.

"Hell," "wrath," "darkness," "misery," and "eternal

death," mean the same thing through all Scripture, and these are the only things from which we want to be redeemed; and, where there is nothing of hell, there there is nothing of wrath, nor anything that wants, or can admit of the benefits of the Atonement made by Christ.

Either, therefore, all hell is in the essence of the holy Deity, or nothing that wants to be atoned by the merits and death of Christ can possibly be in the Deity itself.

The Apostle says, that *we are by nature children of wrath;* the same thing as when the Psalmist says, *I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.* And, therefore, that wrath which wants the atonement of the sufferings, blood, and death of Christ, is no other than that sin, or sinful state, in which we are naturally born. But now, if this wrath could be supposed to be in the Deity itself, then it would follow, that by being by nature children of wrath, we should thereby be the true children of God, we should not want any atonement, or new birth from above to make us *partakers of the divine nature,* because that wrath that was in us would be our dwelling in God, and He in us.

Again, all Scripture teaches us that God wills and desires the removal or extinction of that wrath which is betwixt God and the creature; and, therefore, all Scripture teaches that the wrath is not in God, for God cannot will the removal or alteration of anything that is in Himself; this is as impossible as for Him to will the extinction of his own omnipotence. Nor can there be anything in God contrary

to or against His own will; and yet, if God wills the extinction of a wrath that is in Himself, it must be in Him, contrary to, or against His own will.

This, I presume, is enough to show you that the atonement made by Christ is itself the greatest of all proofs that it was not to atone or extinguish any wrath in the Deity itself; nor, indeed, any way to affect or alter any quality or temper in the divine Mind, but purely and solely to overcome and remove all that death and hell and wrath and darkness that had opened itself in the nature, birth, and life of fallen man.

Eusebius. The truth of all this is not to be denied; and yet it is as true that all our systems of divinity give quite another account of this most important matter. The satisfaction of Christ is represented as a satisfaction made to a wrathful Deity; and the merit of the sufferings and death of Christ, as that which could only avail with God to give up His own wrath and think of mercy towards man. Nay, what is still worse, if possible, the ground and nature and efficacy of this great transaction between God and man is often explained by debtor and creditor: man, as having contracted a debt with God that he could not pay, and God, as having a right to insist upon the payment of it; and, therefore, only to be satisfied by receiving the death and sacrifice of Christ as a valuable consideration, instead of the debt that was due to Him from man.

Theophilus. Hence you may see, Eusebius, how unreasonably complaint has been sometimes made against the

"Appeal,"* the "Spirit of Prayer,"† &c., as introducing a philosophy into the doctrines of the Gospel, not enough supported by the letter of Scripture; though everything there asserted has been over and over shown to be well grounded on the letter of Scripture, and necessarily included in the most fundamental doctrines of the Gospel.

Yet they who make this complaint blindly swallow a vanity of philosophy in the most important part of Gospel religion, which not only has less Scripture for it than the infallibility of the Pope, but is directly contrary to the plain letter of every single text of Scripture that relates to this matter: as I will now show you.

First, the Apostle says, *God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* What becomes now of the philosophy of debtor and creditor, of a satisfaction made by Christ to a wrath in God; is it not the grossest of all fictions, and in full contrariety to the plain written Word of God? *God so loved the world;* behold the degree of it! But when did He so love it? Why, before it was redeemed, before He sent, or gave His only Son to be the Redeemer of it. Here you see that all wrath in God, antecedent to our redemption, or the sacrifice of Christ for us, is utterly excluded; there is no possibility for the supposition of it, it is as absolutely denied as words can do it. And, therefore, the infinite love, mercy, and compassion of God towards fallen man are not purchased or procured for us by the

* London, 1756. Reprint, London (Darling), 1845. † London, 1762.

death of Christ, but the Incarnation and sufferings of Christ come from and are given to us by the infinite antecedent Love of God for us, and are the gracious effects of His own love and goodness towards us.

It is needless to show you how constantly this same doctrine is asserted and repeated by all the Apostles.

Thus says St. John again, *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because* He sent *his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.** Again, *This is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.* Again, *God*, says St. Paul, *was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.* Which is repeated, and further opened in these words, *Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.*† And again, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*‡

How great, therefore, Eusebius, is the error, how total the disregard of Scripture, and how vain the philosophy which talks of a wrath in God antecedent to our redemption, or of a debt which He could not forgive us till He had received a valuable consideration for it, when all Scriptures, from page to page, tell us that all the mercy, and blessing, and benefits of Christ, as our Saviour, are the free antecedent gift of God

* 1 John iv. 9. † Colos. i. 12, 13. ‡ Eph. i. 3.

Himself to us, and bestowed upon us for no other reason, from no other motive, but the infinity of His own love towards us, agreeable to what the evangelical prophet says of God, *I am He that blotteth out transgressions for my own sake*,* that is, not for any reason or motive that can be laid before Me, but because I am love itself, and my own nature is my immutable reason why nothing but works of love, blessing, and goodness can come from Me.

Look we now at the Scripture account of the nature of the Atonement and satisfaction of Christ, and this will further show us that it is not to atone or alter any quality or temper in the divine Mind, nor for the sake of God, but purely and solely to atone, to quench, and overcome that death, and wrath, and hell under the power of which man was fallen.

As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.— This is the whole work, the whole nature, and the sole end of Christ's sacrifice of Himself; and there is not a syllable in Scripture that gives you any other account of it; it all consists, from the beginning to the end, in carrying on the one work of regeneration; and therefore the Apostle says, *The first Adam was made a living soul, but the last or second Adam was made a quickening Spirit*, because sent into the world by God to quicken and revive that life from above, which we lost in Adam. And He is called our ransom, our Atonement, &c., for no other reason but because that which He did and suffered in our fallen nature was as truly an efficacious means of our being born again to a new heavenly

* Isa. xliii. 25.

life, of Him, and from Him, as that which Adam did, was the true and natural cause of our being born in sin, and the impurity of bestial flesh and blood.

And as Adam, by what he did, may be truly said to have purchased our misery and corruption, to have bought death for us, and to have sold us into a slavery under the world, the flesh, and the devil; though all that we have from him, or suffer by him, is only the inward working of his own nature and life within us; so, according to the plain meaning of the words, Christ may be said to be our price, our ransom, and Atonement, though all that He does for us, as buying, ransoming, and redeeming us, is done wholly and solely by a birth of His own Nature and Spirit brought to life in us.

The Apostle says, *Christ died for our sins.* Thence it is, that He is the great sacrifice for sin, and its true Atonement. But how and why is He so? The Apostle tells you in these words, *The sting of death is sin. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* And therefore Christ is the Atonement of our sins, when by and from Him living in us, we have victory over our sinful nature.

The Scriptures frequently say, Christ gave Himself for us. But what is the full meaning, effect, and benefit, of his thus giving Himself for us? The Apostle puts this out of all doubt when he says, *Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people;—that He might deliver us from this present evil world,—from the curse of the law,—from the*

power of Satan,—from the wrath to come; or, as the Apostle says in other words, *that He might be made unto us, wisdom, righteousness,* and *sanctification.*

The whole truth, therefore, of the matter is plainly this, Christ given for us is neither more nor less than Christ given into us. And He is in no other sense our full, perfect, and sufficient Atonement, than as His nature and Spirit are born and formed in us, which so purge us from our sins that we are thereby, in Him and by Him dwelling in us, become new creatures, having our conversation in heaven.

As Adam is truly our defilement and impurity by his birth in us, so Christ is our Atonement and purification by our being born again of Him, and having thereby quickened and revived in us that first divine life which was extinguished in Adam. And, therefore, as Adam purchased death for us, just so in the same manner, in the same degree, and in the same sense, Christ purchases life for us. And each of them solely by their own inward life within us.

This is the one Scripture account of the whole nature, the sole end, and full efficacy of all that Christ did and suffered for us. It is all comprehended in these two texts of Scripture: (1.) *That Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil;* (2.) *That as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.* From the beginning to the end of Christ's atoning work, no other power is ascribed to it, nothing else is intended by it, as an appeaser of wrath, but the destroying of all that in man which comes from the devil; no

other merits, or value, or infinite worth, than that of its infinite ability and sufficiency to quicken again in all human nature that heavenly life that died in Adam.

Eusebius. Though all that is here said seems to have both the letter and spirit of Scripture on its side, yet I am afraid it will be thought not enough to assert the infinite value and merits of our Saviour's sufferings. For it is the common opinion of doctors that the righteousness or justice of God must have satisfaction done to it; and that nothing could avail with God, as a satisfaction, but the infinite worth and value of the sufferings of Christ.

Theophilus. It is true, Eusebius, that this is often, and almost always, thus asserted in human writers, but it is neither the language nor the doctrine of Scripture.

Not a word is there said of a righteousness or justice, as an attribute in God, that must be satisfied; or that the sacrifice of Christ is that which satisfies the righteousness that is in God Himself.

It has been sufficiently proved to you that God wanted not to be reconciled to fallen man; that He never was anything else towards him but Love; and that His Love brought forth the whole scene of his redemption. Thence it is that the Scriptures do not say that Christ came into the world to procure us the divine favour and good-will in order to put a stop to an antecedent righteous wrath in God towards us. No, the reverse of all this is the truth, viz., that Christ and His whole mediatorial office came purely and solely from God, already so reconciled to us as

to bestow an infinity of love upon us. *The God of all grace*, says the Apostle, *who hath called us to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ.** Here you see, Christ is not the cause or motive of God's mercy towards fallen man, but God's own love for us, His own desire of our eternal glory and happiness, has for that end given us Christ, that we may be made partakers of it. The same as when it is again said, *God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself;* that is, calling and raising it out of its ungodly and miserable state.

Thus, all the mystery of our redemption proclaims nothing but a God of Love towards fallen man. It was the Love of God that could not behold the misery of fallen man without demanding and calling for his salvation. It was Love alone that wanted to have full satisfaction done to it, and such a love as could not be satisfied till all that glory and happiness that was lost by the death of Adam was fully restored and regained again by the death of Christ.

Eusebius. But is there not some good sense, in which righteousness or justice may be said to be satisfied by the atonement and sacrifice of Christ?

Theophilus. Yes, most certainly there is. But then it is only that righteousness or justice that belongs to man, and ought to be in him. Now, righteousness, wherever it is to be, has no mercy in itself; it makes no condescensions; it is inflexibly rigid; its demands are inexorable; prayers, offerings, and entreaties have no effect upon it; it will have nothing but itself; nor will it ever cease its demands, or

* 1 Peter v. 10.

take anything in lieu of them, as a satisfaction instead of itself. Thus, *without holiness*, says the Apostle, *no man shall see the Lord.* And again, *nothing that is defiled or impure can enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And this is meant by righteousness being rigid, and having no mercy; it cannot spare, or have pity, or hear entreaty, because all its demands are righteous and good, and therefore must be satisfied or fulfilled.

Now righteousness has its absolute demands upon man, because man was created righteous, and has lost that original righteousness which he ought to have kept in its first purity. And this is the one only righteousness or justice which Christ came into the world to satisfy, not by giving some highly valuable thing as a satisfaction to it, but by bringing back, or raising up again in all human nature that holiness or righteousness which originally belonged to it. For to satisfy righteousness, means neither more nor less than to fulfil it. Nor can righteousness want to have satisfaction in any being but in that being which has fallen from it; nor can it be satisfied but by restoring or fulfilling righteousness in that being which had departed from it. And therefore the Apostle says that *we are* created *again unto righteousness in Christ Jesus.* And this is the one and only way of Christ's expiating or taking away the sins of the world, namely, by restoring to man his lost righteousness. For this end, says the Scripture, *Christ gave himself for the Church, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, that He might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or*

*wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.**

This is the one righteousness which Christ came into the world to satisfy by fulfilling it Himself, and enabling man by a new birth from Him to fulfil it. And when all unrighteousness is removed by Christ from the whole human nature, then all that righteousness is satisfied, for the doing of which Christ poured out his most precious, availing, and meritorious blood.

Eusebius. Oh, Theophilus, the ground on which you stand must certainly be true. It so easily, so fully solves all difficulties and objections, and enables you to give so plain and solid an account of every part of our redemption. This great point is so fully cleared up to me, that I do not desire another word about it.

Theophilus. However, Eusebius, I will add a word or two more upon it, that there may be no room left either for misunderstanding or denying what has been just now said of the nature of that righteousness which must have full satisfaction done to it by the atoning and redeeming work of Christ. And then you will be fully possessed of these two great truths: First, that there is no righteous wrath in the Deity itself, and therefore none to be atoned there. Secondly, that though God is in himself a mere infinity of Love, from whom nothing else but works of love and blessing and goodness can proceed, yet sinful men are hereby not at all delivered from that which the Apostle calls the

* Eph. v. 25.

terrors of the Lord, but that all the threatenings of woe, misery, and punishment, denounced in Scripture against sin and sinners, both in this world and that which is to come, stand all of them in their full force, and are not in the least degree weakened or less to be dreaded because God is all Love.

Everything that God has created is right, and just, and good in its kind, and has its own righteousness within itself. The rectitude of its nature is its only law; and it has no other righteousness but that of continuing in its first state. No creature is subject to any pain, or punishment, or guilt of sin, but because it has departed from its first right state, and only does and can feel the painful loss of its own first perfection. And every intelligent creature that departs from the state of its creation is unrighteous, evil, and full of its own misery. And there is no possibility for any disordered fallen creature to be free from its own misery and pain till it is again in its first state of perfection. This is the certain and infallible ground of the absolute necessity, either of a perfect holiness in this life, or of a further purification after death, before man can enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Now this pain and misery, which is inseparable from the creature that is not in that state in which it ought to be, and in which it was created, is nothing else but the painful state of the creature for want of its own proper righteousness, as sickness is the painful state of the creature for want of its own proper health.

No other righteousness, no other justice, no other severe vengeance, demands satisfaction or torments the sinner but that very righteousness which was once in him, which still belongs to him, and therefore will not suffer him to have any rest or peace till it is again in him as it was at the first. All, therefore, that Christ does, as an Atonement for sin, or as a Satisfaction to righteousness, is all done in, and to, and for man, and has no other operation but that of renewing the fallen nature of man and raising it up into its first state of original righteousness. And if this righteousness, which belongs solely to man, and wants no satisfaction but that of being restored and fulfilled in the human nature, is sometimes called the Righteousness of God, it is only so called because it is a righteousness which man had originally from God in and by his creation; and therefore, as it comes from God, and has its whole nature and power of working as it does from God, it may very justly be called God's Righteousness.

Agreeably to this way of ascribing that to God which is only in the state and condition of man, the Psalmist says of God, *Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.* And yet nothing else or more is meant by it than when he says, *My sins have taken such hold of me, that I am not able to look up. My iniquities are gone over my head, and are like a sore burden too heavy for me to bear.*

Now, whether you call this state of man the burden of his sins and wickedness, or the arrows of the Almighty and the weight of God's hand, they mean but one and the same

thing, which can only be called by these different names for no other reason but this, because man's own original righteousness, which he had from God, makes his sinful state a pain and torment to him, and lies heavy upon him in every commission of sin. And when the Psalmist again says, *Take thy plague away from me, I am even consumed by means of thy heavy hand*, it is only praying to be delivered from his own plague, and praying for the same thing as when he says, in other words, *Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

Now this language of Scripture, which teaches us to call the pains and torments of our sins the arrows, darts, and strokes of God's hand upon us, which calls us to own the power, presence, and operation of God in all that we feel and find in our inward state, is the language of the most exalted piety, and highly suitable to that Scripture which tells us that, *in God we live, and move, and have our being.* For by teaching us to find and own the power and operation of God in everything that passes within us, it keeps us continually turned to God for all that we want, and by all that we feel within ourselves, and brings us to this best of all confessions, that pain, as well as peace of mind, is the effect and manifestation of God's infinite love and goodness towards us.

For we could not have this pain and sensibility of the burden of sin but because the love and goodness of God made us originally righteous and happy; and, therefore, all the pains and torments of sin come from God's first goodness towards us, and are in themselves merely and truly the

arrows of His Love, and His blessed means of drawing us back to that first righteous state, in and for which His first and never-ceasing Love created us.

Eusebius. The matter, therefore, plainly stands thus. There is no righteous wrath or vindictive justice in the Deity itself which, as a quality or attribute of resentment in the divine Mind, wants to be contented, atoned, or satisfied; but man's original righteousness, which was once his peace and happiness and rest in God, is by the Fall of Adam become his tormentor, his plague, that continually exercises its good vengeance upon him, till it truly regains its first state in him.

Secondly. Man must be under this pain, punishment, and vengeance to all eternity; there is no possibility in the nature of the thing for it to be otherwise, though God be all Love, unless man's lost righteousness be fully again possessed by him. And therefore the doctrine of God's being all Love, of having no wrath in Himself, has nothing in it to abate the force of those Scriptures which threaten punishment to sinners, or to make them less fearful of living and dying in their sins.

Theophilus. What you say, Eusebius, is very true; but then it is but half the truth of this matter. You should have added, that this doctrine is the one ground and only reason why the Scriptures abound with so many declarations of woe, misery, and judgments, sometimes executed, and sometimes only threatened by God; and why all sinners, to the end of the world, must know and feel, *that the wrath*

*of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, and that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish must be upon every soul of man that doth evil.**

For all these things, which the Apostle elsewhere calls *the terrors of the Lord*, have no ground, nothing that calls for them, nothing that vindicates the fitness and justice of them, either with regard to God or Man, but this one truth, viz., that God is in Himself a mere infinity of Love, from whom nothing but outflowings of love and goodness can come forth from eternity to eternity. For if God is all Love, if He wills nothing towards fallen man but his full deliverance from the blind slavery and captivity of his earthly, bestial nature, then every kind of punishment, distress, and affliction that can extinguish the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of this life may, and ought to be expected from God, merely because He is all Love and good-will towards fallen man.

To say therefore, as some have said, If God is all Love towards fallen man, how can He threaten, or chastise sinners? This is no better than saying, If God is all goodness in Himself, and towards man, how can He do that in and to man which is for his good? As absurd as to say, if the able physician is all love, goodness, and good-will towards his patients, how can he blister, purge, or scarify them; how can he order one to be trepanned, and another to have a limb cut off? Nay, so absurd is this reasoning, that if it could be proved that God had no chastisement for

* Rom. i. 18; ii. 8.

sinners, the very want of this chastisement would be the greatest of all proofs that God was not all love and goodness towards man.

The meek, merciful, and compassionate Jesus, who had no errand in this world but to bless and save mankind, said, if thy right eye, or thy right hand offend thee, pluck out the one, cut off the other, and cast them from thee. And that He said all this from mere love, He adds, it is better for thee to do this, than that thy whole body should be cast into hell. Therefore, if the holy Jesus had been wanting in this severity, He had been wanting in true love towards man.

And therefore the pure mere love of God is that alone from which sinners are justly to expect from God, that no sin will pass unpunished, but that His love will visit them with every calamity and distress that can help to break and purify the bestial heart of man, and awaken in him true repentance and conversion to God. It is love alone in the Holy Deity that will allow no peace to the wicked, nor ever cease its judgments till every sinner is forced to confess that it is good for him that he has been in trouble, and thankfully own, that not the wrath, but the love of God, has plucked out that right eye, cut off that right hand, which he ought to have done, but would not do, for himself and his own salvation.

Again. This doctrine, that allows of no wrath in the divine Mind, but places it all in the evil state of fallen nature and creature, has everything in it that can prove to man the dreadful nature of sin, and the absolute necessity of

totally departing from it. It leaves no room for self-delusion, but puts an end to every false hope, or vain seeking for relief in anything else but the total extinction of sin. And this it effectually does, by showing that damnation is no foreign, separate, or imposed state, that is brought in upon us or adjudged to us by the Will of God, but is the inborn, natural, essential state of our own disordered nature, which is absolutely impossible, in the nature of the thing, to be anything else but our own hell, both here and hereafter, unless all sin be separated from us, and righteousness be again made our natural state, by a birth of itself in us. And all this, not because God will have it so, by an arbitrary act of His sovereign will, but because He cannot change His own nature, or make anything to be happy and blessed, but only that which has its proper righteousness, and is of one will and spirit with Himself.

If, then, every creature that has lost, or is without the true rectitude of its nature must, as such, of all necessity, be absolutely separated from God, and necessarily under the pain and misery of a life that has lost all its own natural good; if no omnipotence, or mercy, or goodness of God can make it to be otherwise, or give any relief to the sinner, but by a total extinction of sin by a birth of righteousness in the soul, then it fully appears that, according to this doctrine, everything in God, and Nature, and Creature calls the sinner to an absolute renunciation of all sin as the one only possible means of salvation, and leaves no room for him to deceive himself with the hopes that anything else will do

instead of it. Vainly therefore is it said that if God be all Love, the sinner is let loose from the dreadful apprehensions of living and dying in his sins.

On the other hand, deny this doctrine, and say, with the current of scholastic divines, that sin must be doomed to eternal pain and death, unless a supposed wrath, in the mind of the Deity, be first atoned and satisfied; and that Christ's death was that valuable gift, or offering made to God, by which alone He could be moved to lay aside or extinguish His own wrath towards fallen man; say this, and then you open a wide door for licentiousness and infidelity in some, and superstitious fears in others.

For if the evil, the misery, and sad effects of sin are placed in a wrath in the divine Mind, what can this beget in the minds of the pious but superstitious fears about a supposed wrath in God, which they can never know when it is or is not atoned? Every kind of superstition has its birth from this belief, and cannot well be otherwise. And as to the licentious, who want to stifle all fears of gratifying all their passions, this doctrine has a natural tendency to do this for them. For if they are taught that the hurt and misery of sin is not its own natural state, not owing to its own wrath and disorder, but to a wrath in the Deity, how easy is it for them to believe either that God may not be so full of wrath as is given out, or that He may overcome it Himself, and not keep the sinner eternally in a misery that is not his own, but wholly brought upon him from without, by a resentment in the divine Mind.

Again, this account which the schools give of the sacrifice of Christ, made to atone a wrath in the Deity by the infinite value of Christ's death, is that alone which helps Socinians, Deists, and infidels of all kinds to such cavils and objections to the mystery of our redemption, as neither have, nor can be silenced by the most able defenders of that scholastic fiction. The learning of a Grotius or Stillingfleet, when defending such an account of the Atonement and satisfaction, rather increases than lessens the objections to this mystery; but if you take this matter as it truly is in itself, viz., that God is in Himself all Love and goodness, therefore can be nothing else but all love and goodness towards fallen man, and that fallen man is subject to no pain or misery, either present or to come, but what is the natural, unavoidable, essential effect of his own evil and disordered nature, impossible to be altered by himself, and that the infinite, never-ceasing love of God has given Jesus Christ *in all His process*, as the highest and only possible means that heaven and earth can afford, to save man from himself, from his own evil, misery, and death, and restore to him his original divine life; when you look at this matter in this true light, then a God, all Love, and an Atonement for sin by Christ, not made to pacify a wrath in God, but to bring forth, fulfil, and restore righteousness in the creature that had lost it, have everything in them that can make the providence of God adorable and the state of man comfortable.

Here all superstition and superstitious fears are at once totally cut off, and every work of piety is turned into a

work of love. Here every false hope of every kind is taken from the licentious, they have no ground left to stand upon, nothing to trust to as a deliverance from misery but the one total abolition of sin.

The Socinian and the Infidel are here also robbed of all their philosophy against this mystery; for, as it is not founded upon, does not teach, an infinite resentment that could only be satisfied by an infinite atonement, as it stands not upon the ground of debtor and creditor, all their arguments, which suppose it to be such, are quite beside the matter, and touch nothing of the truth of this blessed mystery. For it is the very reverse of all this, it declares a God that is all Love; and the Atonement of Christ to be nothing else in itself, but the highest, most natural, and efficacious means, through all the possibility of things, that the infinite Love and wisdom of God could use to put an end to sin, and death, and hell, and restore to man his first divine state or life. I say, the most natural, efficacious means through all the possibilities of nature; for there is nothing that is supernatural, however mysterious, in the whole system of our redemption: every part of it has its ground in the workings and powers of Nature, and all our redemption is only Nature set right or made to be that which it ought to be.

There is nothing that is supernatural but God alone; everything besides Him is from and subject to the state of nature: it can never rise out of it, or have anything contrary to it. No creature can have either health or sickness, good or evil, or any state either from God or itself, but

strictly according to the capacities, powers, and workings of Nature.

The mystery of our Redemption, though it comes from the supernatural God, has nothing in it but what is done, and to be done within the sphere, and according to the powers of Nature. There is nothing supernatural in it, or belonging to it, but that supernatural Love and wisdom which brought it forth, presides over it and will direct it, till Christ, as a second Adam, has removed and extinguished all that evil which the first Adam brought into the human nature.

And the whole *process* of Jesus Christ from his being the Inspoken Word, or Bruiser of the serpent given to Adam, to His birth, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, has all its ground and reason in this, because nothing else in all the possibilities of Nature, either in heaven or on earth, could begin, carry on, and totally effect man's deliverance from the evil of his own fallen nature.

Thus is Christ the one, full, sufficient Atonement for the sin of the whole world, because He is the one only natural remedy and possible cure of all the evil that is broken forth in Nature—the one only natural Life and Resurrection of all that holiness and happiness that died in Adam. And seeing all this *process* of Christ is given to the world from the supernatural, antecedent, infinite love of God, therefore it is, that the Apostle says, *God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself.* And Christ in God is nothing else in His whole nature but that same, certain, and natural parent of a

redemption to the whole human nature, as fallen Adam was the certain and natural parent of a miserable life to every man that is descended from him: with this only difference, that from fallen Adam we are born in sin, whether we will or no, but we cannot have that new birth which Christ has all power to bring forth in us, unless the will of our heart closes with it.

But as nothing came to us from Adam but according to the powers of nature, and because he was that which he was with relation to us; so it is with Christ and our redemption by Him: all the work is grounded in, and proceeds according to the powers of nature, or in a way of natural efficacy or fitness to produce its effects; and everything that is found in the Person, character, and condition of Christ, is only there as His true and natural qualification to do all that He came to do, in us and for us. That is to say, Christ was made to be that which He was: He was a seed of life in our first fallen father; He lived as a blessing of promise in the patriarchs, prophets, and Israel of God; He was born as a man, of a pure virgin; He did all that He did, whether as suffering, dying, conquering, rising, and ascending into heaven, only as so many things which, as naturally and as truly, according to the nature of things, qualified Him to be the producer or quickener of a divine life in us, as the state and condition of Adam qualified him to make us the slavish children of earthly bestial flesh and blood.

This is the comfortable doctrine of our Redemption; nothing in God but an infinity of love and goodness to-

wards our fallen condition; nothing in Christ but that which had its necessity in the nature of things, to make Him able to give, and us to receive our full salvation from Him.

I will now only add, that from the beginning of Deism, and from the time of Socinus to this day, not a Socinian or Deist has ever seen or opposed this mystery in its true state, as is undeniably plain from all their writings.

A late writer, who has as much knowledge, and zeal, and wit in the cause of Deism as any of his predecessors, is forced to attack our redemption by giving this false account of it.

"That a perfectly innocent Being of the highest order among intelligent natures should personate the offender, and suffer in his place and stead, in order to take down the wrath and resentment of the Deity against the criminal, and dispose God to show mercy to him, the deist conceives to be both unnatural and improper, and therefore not to be ascribed to God without blasphemy."

And again, "The common notion of redemption among Christians seems to represent the Deity in a disagreeable light, as implacable and revengeful, &c."*

What an Arrow is here, I will not say, shot beside the mark, but shot at nothing! Because nothing of that which

* "Deism fairly stated, and fully vindicated," p. 41. This tract created a great sensation at the time of its publication, judging by the many answers it received. For a list of these see Preface to the Appendix of Benson's "Reasonableness of the Christian Religion," to which Leland refers in the place cited below. "'The case of Deism fairly stated and fully vindicated' was published in 1746. Though originally writ by another hand, it is said to have been revised by Mr. Chubb, and to have undergone considerable alterations and amendments." See Leland's "Deistical Writers," Letter xiv., vol. i. 377-9. London. 1754.

he accuses is to be found in our Redemption. The God of Christians is so far from being, as he says, implacable and revengeful, that you have seen it proved, from text to text, that the whole form and manner of our Redemption comes wholly from the free, antecedent, infinite love and goodness of God towards fallen man. That the innocent Christ did not suffer to quiet an angry Deity, but merely as co-operating, assisting, and uniting with that Love of God which desired our salvation. That He did not suffer in our place or stead, but only on our account, which is a quite different matter. And to say that He suffered in our place or stead is as absurd, as contrary to Scripture, as to say that He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven in our place and stead, that we might be excused from it. For His sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension are all of them equally on our account, for our sake, for our good and benefit, but none of them possible to be in our stead.

And as Scripture and truth affirm that He ascended into heaven for us, though neither Scripture nor truth will allow it to be in our place and stead, so for the same reasons it is strictly true that He suffered and died for us, though no more in our place or stead, nor any more desirable to be so, than his ascension into heaven for us should be in our place and stead.

I have quoted the above passages only to show you that a defender of Deism, however acute and ingenious, has not one objection to the doctrine of our Redemption but what is founded on the grossest ignorance and total mistake of the

whole nature of it. But when I lay this gross ignorance to the Deists' charge I do not mean any natural dulness, want of parts, or incapacity in them to judge aright, but only that something or other, either men, or books, or their own way of life, has hindered their seeing the true ground and real nature of Christianity as it is in itself.

Eusebius. I would fain hope, Theophilus, that from all that has been said in the "*Demonstration of the Fundamental Errors of the Plain Account*," the "*Appeal to all that Doubt*," &c., and the rest that follow to these dialogues, in all which Christianity and Deism, with their several merits, are so plainly, and with so much good-will and affection towards all unbelievers, represented to them, all that are serious and well-minded amongst the Deists will be prevailed upon to reconsider the matter; for though some people have been hasty enough to charge those writings with fanaticism or enthusiasm, as disclaiming the use of our reason in religious matters, yet this charge can be made by none but those who, having not read them, take up with hearsay censures.

For in those books, from the beginning to the end, nothing is appealed to but the natural light of the mind and the plain known nature of things; no one is led or desired to go one step farther. The use of reason is not only allowed, but asserted, and proved to be of the same service to us in things of religion as in things that relate to our senses in this world.*

* "Demostr. of the Errors of the Plain Account" against Bishop Hoadly. According to the Biog. Britan., Hoadly's "Plain Account" appeared in 1735.

The true ground, nature, and power of faith is opened by fully proving that this saying of Christ, *According to thy faith, so be it done unto thee*, takes in every individual of human nature; and that all men, whether Christians, Deists, Idolaters, or Atheists, are all of them equally men of faith, —all equally and absolutely governed by it, and therefore must have all that they have, salvation or damnation, strictly and solely according to their faith.* All this is so evidently proved, that I cannot help thinking but that every considerate reader must be forced to own it.

Theogenes. All this is well said. But let us now return to the finishing of our main point, which was to show that the doctrine of a God all Love, not only does not destroy the necessity of Christ's death and the infinite value and merits of it, but is itself the fullest proof and strongest confirmation of both.

Theophilus. How it could enter into any one's head to charge this doctrine with destroying the necessity and merits of Christ's death is exceeding strange.

For look where you will, no other cause or reason of the death of Christ can be found but in the love of God towards fallen man. Nor could the Love of God will or accept of the death of Christ, but because of its absolute necessity and availing efficacy to do all that for fallen man which the Love of God would have to be done for him.

God did not, could not, love, or like, or desire the sufferings and death of Christ for what they were in themselves,

* "Way to Divine Knowledge," pp. 168, *et seq.* London. 2nd Ed. 1762.

or as sufferings of the highest kind. No, the higher and greater such sufferings had been, were they only considered in themselves, the less pleasing they had been to a God that wills nothing but blessing and happiness to everything capable of it.

But all that Christ was, and did, and suffered, was infinitely prized and highly acceptable to the love of God, because all that Christ was, and did, and suffered in His own Person was that which gave Him full power to be a common Father of Life to all that died in Adam.

Had Christ wanted anything that He was, or did, or suffered in His own Person, He could not have stood in that relation to all mankind as Adam had done. Had He not been given to the first fallen man as a seed of the woman, as a light of Life, enlightening every man that comes into the world, He could not have had His seed in every man as Adam had, nor been as universal a father of Life as Adam was of Death. Had He not in the fitness or fulness of time become a man, born of a pure virgin, the first seed of life in every man must have lain only as a seed, and could not have come to the fulness of the birth of a new man in Christ Jesus. For the children can have no other state of life but that which their father first had. And therefore Christ, as the Father of a regenerated human race, must first stand in the fulness of that human state which was to be derived from Him into all His children.

This is the absolute necessity of Christ's being all that He was before He became man; a necessity arising from

the nature of the thing. Because he could not possibly have had the relation of a Father to all mankind, nor any power to be a quickener of a life of heaven in them, but because He was both God in Himself and a seed of God in all of them.

Now, all that Christ was, and did, and suffered, after He became man, is from the same necessity founded in the nature of the thing. He suffered on no other account but because that which He came to do in and for the human nature was and could be nothing else in itself but a work of sufferings and death.

A crooked line cannot become straight but by having all its crookedness given up or taken from it. And there is but one way possible in nature for a crooked line to lose its crookedness.

Now the sufferings and death of Christ stand in this kind of necessity. He was made man for our salvation: that is, He took upon Him our fallen nature to bring it out of its evil, crooked state, and set it again in that rectitude in which it was created.

Now there are no more two ways of doing this, than there are two ways of making a crooked line to become straight.

If the life of fallen nature, which Christ had taken upon Him, was to be overcome by Him, then every kind of suffering and dying that was a giving up or departing from the life of fallen nature was just as necessary, in the nature of the thing, as that the line to be made straight must give

up and part with every kind and degree of its own crookedness.

And therefore the sufferings and death of Christ were, in the nature of the thing, the only possible way of His acting contrary to and overcoming all the evil that was in the fallen state of man.

The Apostle says, *the Captain of our salvation was to be made perfect through sufferings.* This was the ground and reason of His sufferings: had He been without them, He could not have been perfect in Himself as a Son of Man, nor the Restorer of perfection in all mankind. But why so? Because His perfection, as a Son of Man, or the Captain of human salvation, could only consist in His acting in, and with a spirit suitable to, the first created state of perfect man; that is, He must, in His spirit, be as much above all the good and evil of this fallen world as the first man was.

But now, He could not show that He was of this spirit—that He was above the world—that He was under no power of fallen nature, but lived in the perfection of the first created man—He could not do this but by showing that all the good of the earthly life was renounced by Him, and that all the evil which the world, the malice of men and devils, could bring upon Him, could not hinder His living wholly and solely to God, and doing His will on earth with the same fulness as angels do it in heaven.

But had there been any evil in all fallen nature—whether in life, death, or hell—that had not attacked Him with all its force, He could not have been said to have overcome it.

And therefore so sure as Christ, as the Son of Man, was to overcome the world, death, hell, and Satan, so sure is it that all the evils which they could possibly bring upon Him were to be felt and suffered by Him as absolutely necessary, in the nature of the thing, to declare His perfection and prove His superiority over them. Surely, my friend, it is now enough proved to you how a God, all Love towards fallen man, must love, like, desire, and delight in all the sufferings of Christ, which alone could enable Him, as a Son of Man, to undo and reverse all that evil which the first man had done to all his posterity.

Eusebius. Oh, sir, in what an adorable light is this mystery now placed; and yet in no other light than that in which the plain letter of all Scripture sets it.* No wrath in God, no fictitious atonement, no folly of debtor and creditor, no sufferings in Christ for sufferings' sake, but a Christ suffering and dying, as His same victory over death and hell, as when He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

Theophilus. Sure now, Eusebius, you plainly enough see wherein the infinite merits, or the availing efficacy and glorious power, of the sufferings and death consist, since they were that in and through which Christ Himself came out of the state of fallen nature, and got power to give the same victory to all his brethren of the human race.

Wonder not, therefore, that the Scriptures so frequently ascribe all our salvation to the sufferings and death of Christ

* See the Collection of Letters, Letter iv., pp. 61, 74, &c.

—that we are continually referred to them as the wounds and stripes by which we are healed, as the blood by which we are washed from our sins, as the price (much above gold and precious stones) by which we are bought.

Wonder not also that in the Old Testament, its service, sacrifices, and ceremonies were instituted to typify and point at the great sacrifice of Christ, and to keep up a continual hope, strong expectation, and belief of it; and that in the New Testament, the reality, the benefits, and glorious effects of Christ, our Passover, being actually sacrificed for us, are so joyfully repeated by every Apostle.

It is because Christ, as suffering and dying, was nothing else but Christ conquering and overcoming all the false good and the hellish evil of the fallen state of man.

His Resurrection from the grave and Ascension into heaven, though great in themselves, and necessary parts of our deliverance, were yet but the consequences and genuine effects of His sufferings and death. These were in themselves the reality of His conquest; all His great work was done and effected in them and by them, and His Resurrection and Ascension were only His entering into the possession of that which His sufferings and death had gained for Him.

Wonder not, then, that all the true followers of Christ, the saints of every age, have so gloried in the cross of Christ, have imputed such great things to it, have desired nothing so much as to be partakers of it, to live in constant union with it. It is because His sufferings, His death, and cross, were the fulness of His victory over all the works of

the devil. Not an evil in flesh and blood, not a misery of life, not a chain of death, not a power of hell and darkness, but were all baffled, broken, and overcome by the *process* of a suffering and dying Christ. Well therefore may the cross of Christ be the glory of Christians.

Eusebius. This matter is so solidly and fully cleared up, that I am almost ashamed to ask you anything farther about it. Yet explain a little more, if you please, how it is that the sufferings and death of Christ gave him power to become a common Father of life to all that died in Adam. Or how it is that we, by virtue of them, have victory over all the evil of our fallen state.

Theophilus. You are to know, Eusebius, that the Christian religion is no arbitrary system of divine Worship, but is the one true, real, and only religion of Nature; that it is wholly founded in the nature of things, has nothing in it supernatural or contrary to the powers and demands of Nature; but all that it does is only in, and by, and according to the workings and possibilities of Nature.

A religion that is not founded in Nature is all fiction and falsity, and as mere a nothing as an idol. For, as no creature can be or have anything in it but what it is and has from the nature of things, nor have anything done to it, good or harm, but according to the unalterable workings of Nature, so no religion can be of any service but that which works with and according to the demands of Nature. Nor can any fallen creature be raised out of its fallen state, even by the Omnipotence of God, but according to the nature of

things, or the unchangeable powers of Nature; for Nature is the opening and manifestation of the divine Omnipotence; it is God's power-world; and, therefore, all that God does, is and must be done in and by the powers of Nature. God, though Omnipotent, can give no existence to any creature, but it must have that existence in space and time. Time comes out of eternity, and Space comes out of the infinity of God. God has an omnipotent power over them, in them, and with them, to make both of them set forth and manifest the wonders of His supernatural Deity. Yet Time can only be subservient to the Omnipotence of God according to the nature of time, and Space can only obey His will according to the nature of space; but neither of them can, by any power, be made to be in a supernatural state, or be anything but what they are in their own nature.

Now, right and wrong, good and evil, true and false, happiness and misery, are as unchangeable in nature as time and space. And every state and quality that is creaturely, or that can belong to any creature, has its own nature as unchangeably as Time and Space have theirs.

Nothing, therefore, can be done to any creature supernaturally, or in a way that is without, or contrary to, the powers of nature; but every thing or creature that is to be helped, that is to have any good done to it, or any evil taken out of it, can only have it done so far as the powers of Nature are able and rightly directed to effect it.

And this is the true ground of all divine Revelation, or that help which the supernatural Deity vouchsafes to the

fallen state of man. It is not to appoint an arbitrary system of religious homage to God, but solely to point out and provide for man, blinded by his fallen state, that one only religion that, according to the nature of things, can possibly restore to him his lost perfection. This is the truth, the goodness, and the necessity of the Christian religion; it is true, and good, and necessary, because it is as much the one only natural and possible way of overcoming all the evil of fallen man, as light is the one only natural possible thing that can expel darkness.

And therefore it is, that all the mysteries of the Gospel, however high, are yet true and necessary parts of the one religion of Nature; because they are no higher, nor otherwise, than the natural state of fallen man absolutely stands in need of. His nature cannot be helped, or raised out of the evils of its present state, by anything less than these mysteries; and therefore they are in the same truth and justness to be called his natural religion, as that remedy which alone has full power to remove all the evil of a disease may be justly called its natural remedy.

For a religion is not to be deemed natural, because it has nothing to do with Revelation; but then it is the one true religion of Nature when it has everything in it that our natural state stands in need of—everything that can help us out of our present evil, and raise and exalt us to all the happiness which our nature is capable of having. Supposing therefore the Christian scheme of Redemption to be all that, and nothing else in itself, but that which the nature of

things absolutely require it to be, it must, for that very reason, have its mysteries.

For the fallen, corrupt, mortal state of man absolutely requires these two things as its only salvation. First, the divine Life, or the life of God, must be revived in the soul of man. Secondly, there must be a resurrection of the body in a better state after death. Now nothing in the power of man, or in the things of this world, can effect this Salvation. If therefore this is to be the salvation of man, then some interposition of the Deity is absolutely necessary, in the nature of the thing, or man can have no religion that is sufficiently natural; that is to say, no religion that is sufficient or equal to the wants of his nature.

Now, this necessary interposition of the Deity, though doing nothing but in a natural way, or according to the nature of things, must be mysterious to man, because it is doing something more and higher than his senses or reason ever saw done, or possible to be done, either by himself or any of the powers of this world.

And this is the true ground and nature of the mysteries of Christian Redemption. They are, in themselves, nothing else but what the nature of things requires them to be, as natural efficacious means of our salvation, and all their power is in a natural way, or true fitness of cause for its effect; but they are mysterious to man, because brought into the scheme of our redemption by the interposition of God, to work in a way and manner above and superior to all that is seen and done in the things of this world.

The mysteries, therefore, of the Gospel are so far from showing the Gospel not to be the one true religion of Nature, that they are the greatest proof of it, since they are that alone which can help man to all that good which his natural state wants to have done to it.

For instance, if the salvation of man absolutely requires the revival or restoration of the divine Life in the human nature, then nothing can be the one, sufficient, true religion of nature but that which has a natural power to do this.

What a grossness of error is it therefore to blame that doctrine which asserts the Incarnation of the Son of God, or the necessity of the Word being made flesh, when in the nature of the thing nothing else but this very mystery can be the natural efficacious cause of the renewal of the Divine Life in the human nature, or have any natural efficacy to effect our salvation!

Having now, Eusebius, established this ground, that nothing is, or can be a part of true, natural religion, or have any real efficacy as a means of salvation, but only that which has its efficacy in and from the nature of things, or in the natural fitness of cause to produce its effect, you are brought into the clear view of this truth, viz., that the religion of Deism is false, and vain, and visionary, and to be rejected by every man as the mere enthusiastic, fanatic product of pure imagination; and all for this plain reason, because it quite disregards the nature of things, stands wholly upon a supernatural ground, and goes as much above, and

as directly contrary to the powers of nature, as that faith that trusts in and prays to a wooden god.

I say not this (as is too commonly done) in the spirit of accusation, or to raise an odium. No, by no means. I have the utmost aversion to such a procedure. I would no more bring a false charge against the Deist than I would bear false witness against an Apostle. And I desire to have no temper, spirit, or behaviour towards them, but such as the loving God with all my heart, and loving them as I love myself, require of me. And in this spirit of love I charge them with visionary faith and enthusiastic religion; and only so far, as I have from time to time proved, that they trust to be saved by that which, according to the unchangeable nature of things, can have no power of salvation in it.

For a religion, not grounded in the power and nature of things, is unnatural, supernatural, or superrational, and is rightly called either enthusiasm, vision, fanaticism, superstition, or idolatry, just as you please; for all these are but different names for one and the same religious delusion. And every religion is this delusion, but that one Religion which is required by, and has its efficacy in and from the unchangeable nature of things.

And thus stands the matter betwixt the Deists and myself. If I knew how to do them or the subject more justice, I would gladly do it; having no desire, either for them or myself, but that we may all of us be delivered from everything that separates us from God, all equal sharers of every blessing that He has for human nature, all united in that spirit of

love and goodness for which He created us, and all blessed with that faith and hope to which the God of Love had called us, as the one, only, possible natural, and full means of ever finding ourselves saved and redeemed from all the evil, both of time and eternity.

And now, Eusebius, upon this ground, viz., (1) That there is but one true religion, and that it is the religion of Nature. (2) That a religion has no pretence to be considered as the religion of Nature, because it rejects divine Revelation, and has only human reason for its guide, but wholly and solely because it has every good in it that the natural state of man wants and can receive from religion. (3) That nothing can be any religious good, or have any real efficacy, as a means of salvation, but only that which has its efficacy in and from the natural power of things, or the fitness and sufficiency of cause to produce its effect. (4) That the religion of the Gospel, in all its mysteries and doctrines, is wholly grounded in the natural powers of things, and their fitness to produce their effects. Upon this ground I come to answer your question, viz., How is it that the sufferings and death of Christ gave Him full power to become a common Father of Life to all those that died in Adam? Or how it is that we, by virtue of them, are delivered out of all the evils of our fallen state?

The sufferings and death of Christ have no supernatural effect that is above or contrary to nature; because the thing itself is impossible. For a thing is only therefore impossible because the nature of things will not allow of it.

The fall of all mankind in Adam is no supernatural event or effect, but the natural and necessary consequence of our relation to him. Could Adam at his fall into this earthly life have absolutely overcome every power of the world, the flesh, and the devil, in the same spirit as Christ did, he had been his own Redeemer, had risen out of his fall, and ascended into Paradise, and been the father of a paradisical* offspring, just as Christ, when He had overcome them all, rose from the dead and ascended in heaven. But Adam did not do this, because it was as impossible, in the nature of the thing, as for a beast to raise itself into an angel. If, therefore, man is to come out of his fallen state, there must be something found out that, according to the nature of things, has power to effect it. For it can no more be done supernaturally by anything else than it could by Adam.

Now the matter stood thus: The seed of all mankind was in the loins of fallen Adam. This was unalterable in the nature of the thing, and therefore all mankind must come forth in his fallen state.

Neither can they ever be in any state whatever, whether earthly or heavenly, but by having an earthly man or a heavenly man for their father. For mankind, as such, must of all necessity be born of, and have that nature which it has from a man. And this is the true ground and absolute necessity of the one Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus. For seeing mankind, as such, must have that birth and nature which they have from man; seeing they never could

* *Sic* in Ed. 1776.

have any relation to Paradise, or any possibility of partaking of it, but because they had a paradisical man for their Father, nor could have had any relation to this earthly world, or any possibility of being born earthly, but because they had an earthly man for their father; and seeing all this must be unalterably so for ever, it plainly follows that there was an utter impossibility for the seed of Adam ever to come out of its fallen state, or ever have another or better life than they had from Adam, unless such a Son of Man could be brought into existence as had the same relation to all mankind as Adam had, was as much in them all as Adam was, and had as full power, according to the nature of things, to give a heavenly life to all the seed in Adam's loins as Adam had to bring them forth in earthly flesh and blood.

And now, sir, that Christ was this very Son of Man, standing in the same fulness of relation to all mankind as Adam did, having His seed as really in them all as Adam had, and as truly and fully qualified, according to the nature of things, to be a common and universal Father of Life as Adam was of Death to all the human race, shall in a word or two be made as plain and undeniable as that two and two are four.

The doctrine of our Redemption absolutely asserts that the seed of Christ was sown into the first fallen father of mankind, called the *Seed of the woman*, the Bruiser of the serpent, the ingrafted Word of life, called again in the Gospel, *that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* Therefore Christ was in all men in that same fulness

of the relation of a Father to all mankind as the first Adam was. Secondly, Christ was born of Adam's flesh and blood, took the human nature upon him, and therefore stood as a human creature in the same relation to mankind as Adam did. Nothing, therefore, was further wanting in Christ to make Him as truly a natural Father of Life to all mankind as Adam was at first, but God's appointment of Him to that end.

For as Adam could not have been the natural father of mankind, but because God created and appointed him for that end, so Christ could not have been the natural Regenerator or Redeemer of a heavenly Life that was lost in all mankind, but because God had appointed and brought Him into the world for that end. Now that God did this, that Christ came into the world by divine appointment to be the Saviour, the Resurrection, and Life of all mankind, is a truth as evident from Scripture as that Adam was the first man.

And thus it appears, in the utmost degree of plainness and certainty, that Christ in His single Person was, according to the nature of things, as fully qualified to be a common Redeemer, as Adam was in his single person to be a common father of all mankind. He had His seed in all mankind as Adam had; He had the human nature as Adam had; and He had the same divine appointment as Adam had. But Christ, however qualified to be our Redeemer, could not be actually such till He had gone through and done all that by which our redemption was to be effected.

Adam, however qualified, could not be the father of a paradisical Offspring till he had stood out his trial and fixed himself victorious over everything that could make trial of him. In like manner, Christ, however qualified, could not be the Redeemer of all mankind till He had also stood out His trial, had overcome all that by which Adam was overcome, and had fixed Himself triumphantly in that Paradise which Adam had lost.

Now, as Adam's trial was whether he would keep himself in his paradisical state above, and free from all that was good and evil in this earthly world, so Christ's trial was whether as a son of man and loaded with the infirmities of fallen Adam, sacrificed to all that which the rage and malice of the world, hell, and devils could possibly do to Him, —whether He in the midst of all these evils could live and die with his Spirit as contrary to them, as much above them, as unhurt by them, as Adam should have lived in Paradise.

And then it was that everything which had overcome Adam was overcome by Christ; and Christ's victory did, in the nature of the thing, as certainly and fully open an entrance for Him and all his seed into Paradise, as Adam's fall cast him and all his seed into the prison and captivity of this earthly, bestial world.

Nothing supernatural came to pass in either case, but Paradise lost and Paradise regained, according to the nature of things, or the real efficacy of cause to produce its effects.

Thus is your question fully answered; viz., how and why

the sufferings and death of Christ enabled Him to be the Author of Life to all that died in Adam? Just as the fall of Adam into this world, under the power of sin, death, hell, and the devil, enabled him to be the common father of Death, or was the natural, unavoidable cause of our being born under the same captivity; just so that life, and sufferings, and death of Christ, which declared his breaking out from them and superiority over them, must in the nature of the thing as much enable Him to be the common Author of Life—that is, must as certainly be the full, natural, efficacious cause of our inheriting life from Him. Because, by what Christ was in Himself, by what He was in us, by His whole state, character, and the divine appointment, we all had that natural union with Him and dependence upon Him as our Head in the way of redemption, as we had with Adam as our head in the way of our natural birth. So that as it must be said, that because Adam fell, we must of all necessity be heirs of his fallen state, so with the same truth, and from the same necessity of the thing, it must be said, that because Christ our Head is risen victorious out of our fallen state, we as His members, and having His seed within us, must be and are made His heirs of all His glory. Because in all respects we are as strictly, as intimately connected with and related to Him as the one Redeemer, as we are to Adam as the one father of all mankind. So that Christ by His sufferings and death become in all of us our wisdom, our righteousness, our justification, and redemption, is the same sober and solid truth, as Adam by his fall become in

all of us our foolishness, our impurity, our corruption, and death.

And now, my friends, look back upon all that has been said, and then tell me, Is it possible more to exalt or magnify the infinite merits and availing efficacy of the sufferings and death of Christ than is done by this doctrine? or whether everything that is said of them in Scripture is not here proved, from the very nature of the thing, to be absolutely true? And again, Whether it is not sufficiently proved to you that the sufferings and death of Christ are not only consistent with the doctrine of a God all Love, but are the fullest and most absolute proof of it.

Eusebius. Indeed, Theophilus, you have so fully done for us all that we wanted to have done, that we are now ready to take leave of you. As for my part, I want to return home to enjoy my Bible, and delight myself with reading it in this comfortable light in which you have set the whole ground and nature of our redemption. I am now in full possession of this glorious truth, that God is mere Love—the most glorious truth that can possess and edify the heart of man. It drives every evil out of the soul, and gives life to every spark of goodness that can possibly be kindled in it. Everything in religion is made amiable by being a service of love to the God of Love.

No sacrifices, sufferings, and death, have any place in religion but to satisfy and fulfil that love of God which could not be satisfied without our salvation. If the Son of God is not spared; if He is delivered up to the rage and malice

of men, devils, and hell; it is because, had we not had such a Captain of our salvation made perfect through sufferings, it never could have been sung, *O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?* It never could have been true that *as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,* so *by one Man came the resurrection of the dead.* It never could have been said, *that as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

Therefore, dear Theophilus, adieu. God is Love; and he that has learnt to live in the spirit of love has learnt to live and dwell in God. Love was the beginner of all the works of God; and, from eternity to eternity, nothing can come from God but a variety of wonders and works of love over all nature and creature * * * * *.

THE END.

PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., CITY ROAD, LONDON.

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

THE EUCHARIST

111233

THE EUCHARIST.

THE subject of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, has lately assumed an aspect in our country which, looking back on the history of our Church, would have been thought impossible. Questions are again raised which it had been supposed were long ago set at rest, and this Sacrament has with many now acquired that sense which it was one of the main objects of the Reformation to destroy. The cause of this does not lie on the surface, but it is not difficult to find; and as the subject is one of very great importance, too much attention can scarcely be bestowed upon it. The subject is of so great importance, because the conception to which we allude seems to involve a fundamentally erroneous conception of Revelation itself. No doubt the presence of error amongst us on the subject of the Eucharist has already excited considerable attention, but we do not think that the gravity of the subject has been sufficiently realized, or, generally speaking, if realized, adequately dealt with. We are far from supposing that our handling of the subject will fulfil these conditions, but we

hope that we may indicate a path which may be more perfectly trodden by other and abler writers to come after. And here we cannot but express our surprise that throughout the difficulties of by-gone years on this matter there has been so much laxity and indifference on this subject among religious teachers, and so little realization of that which we believe to have been really at stake, or if it were realized, so few attempts made to deal with it adequately.

The errors which have been rife amongst us on the subject of the Eucharist have been of the gravest kind, involving, in fact, the reality and character of Revelation. They raise the question whether God, properly speaking, is the subject of Revelation, and whether we have any true Revelation at all, in the sense in which alone it would be a *Revelation*, that is, a making of God known; or whether we are merely in the presence of an instrumentality which, indeed, connects us with God, but in no sense by way of a true *Revelation*. Yet we believe these issues to have been at stake; and because this has not been seen, that the present errors on the subject of the Eucharist have not been realized in their gravity. But besides this, surely it is a melancholy thing to see so many earnest young men and women falling away into darkness from want of guidance, wandering as sheep without a shepherd, without those to take them by the hand whom the Church of England has brought up; young men and women whose desires are to be brought nigh unto God, but who are not now brought nigh unto God, but unto something else, by the errors which have arisen. Alas, how

many are now left to gather the Church's teaching only from legal decisions; how many have fallen into the hands of a Church which teaches that Revelation is but another word for darkness—that all we can do is to receive on her authority—to see, that is, by becoming blind!

We are not now speaking of wilful and ambitious people, but of humble and conscientious children of the Church who seek light and are not able to find it. Yet we do not doubt that if their condition were sufficiently realized, capable teachers would appear; at present, however, it is not realized, and there is need therefore of sufficient teachers. Teaching is required, and a teaching beyond that of the past, for new questions have arisen: light must be thrown on past Revelation by the spiritual light of our own day. We are on new ground. For if it be thought that the Bible itself and the teaching of the Reformation are sufficient, experience shows us that such is not the case, that every age requires concurrent light, and that the dead letter of the past must be illuminated by the living spirit of the present. Teachers are required who combine knowledge of the past with the knowledge of their own day, and who can give meaning and power to ancient words by translating them into the language of the present. Yet the present errors must be looked upon with a tender eye, otherwise we shall not be able to deal with them satisfactorily: we shall not be able to realize, that is, that which those now in error see, unless we put ourselves into their position and see error as it comes to them with the

force of truth; and especially is this true in regard to errors connected with the Eucharist.

We have said that the errors now held by many on the subject of the Eucharist indicate a fundamentally erroneous conception of the nature of Revelation: that they proceed upon the supposition that, properly speaking, there we have no Revelation; that is, that Revelation is not light, or something which makes known, communicating knowledge by spiritual channels; but that it is something other and different from this, and something which effects its end another way, in the absence of or by the reversal of the proper actions of the ordinary channels. Starting with this conception, it is not difficult to understand how the errors now current on the Eucharist have been accepted. For on such a basis any doctrine may be accepted, save that which requires the consent of the conscience and of the understanding.

But is such a conception of Revelation true? Does not the word Revelation mean the opposite of this? does it not signify an unveiling or a making known? For Revelation, whether we regard it as in Holy Scripture or by the Incarnation, surely had for its object to bring us nigh unto God. And this can only be done by making God known. And this must be accomplished by spiritual means, by means, that is, kindred with the object with which it has to do. And God is a spirit; He can be approached therefore alone by spiritual means—by reason, by conscience, by the affections. The Most High can only be approached by that

which is most high within ourselves. Revelation, to be truly a Revelation, must be a Revelation to the spirit, entering by the avenues of the mind and heart. Now the Revelation of God in Scripture and in the face of Jesus Christ is primarily this. Nay, all true Revelation of God must be of this sort. It may be of many kinds, but it can have access but in one way, that is by the avenue of the spirit. Nature shows forth God. The heavens declare the glory of God. Man is a Revelation in himself. Law and matter both testify of God. But all these, in whatever way they do so, have access to us but in one way, by spiritual avenues, that is, by the mind and heart. Matter cannot bring us nigh to God save through the avenue of Mind. Law itself reveals something behind itself, ere it bring us to God. All things may, indeed, in one way or another, lead up to or bear witness of God, but we can only realize or apprehend their doing so by the spirit.

Matter, if it is to have access to spirit, can only have access by being invested with something of a spiritual nature—by a connection being given to it with spirit by means of knowledge—by associating matter, that is, with something which is related to knowledge—by clothing it with something which comes in contact with mind. In the Eucharist this is done by connecting its Elements with the history of Christ; making Him there as if He were present, by a presence spiritually apprehended. This spiritual presence is the daughter of knowledge, it is seen but by the spiritual eye, it is received by the spiritual mouth, not other-

wise. A materialistic change incapable of being discerned, is a contradiction in terms. Is there then such change made in the Eucharist? Does such require to be made to set forth or convey that which is meant by it? Let us consider.

The Incarnation is the acme of Revelation, and the Eucharist mirrors its culminating point: they are, as it were, in one sense one; for both have the same end, and act in the same way—viz., by the Revelation of an object to the mind. Both are vehicles of Light, and are only profitable as they are so It was to this end—to give light, to make manifest—that God became Incarnate in Christ: it is this Revelation which is set forth in the Eucharist. God took our nature to give us a Revelation of his own. He clothed himself with Flesh to reveal Spirit. He took Matter to affect mind. He took our nature that we might have His. He spake an outward, that we might discern the inward Word. The Son who is in the bosom of the Father revealed the Father, by coming as man among men, and disclosing the Father by the Son. The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. He did so, that by His life He might manifest God's life, and by manifesting God's life, that we should take it for our own. His life therefore is called the light of men. It is this light, because of that it is, which is light.

God, whom no man can see, became seen. Our eyes saw, our hands handled the Divine thought revealed by the Divine Word. In Christ the character of the Divine and Eternal was given. In Him the Spirit was visible. By His speaking and acting in our flesh the Godhead is

discerned. "The Son of God came to give us an understanding of Him that is true." And He did so by bringing down the Divine to our vision, and again by elevating us to see the Divine. He brought the distant nigh, He made the far-off near. Taking our flesh, He took, as it were, a telescope to bring down heaven to earth. He took our flesh, not to make it a mystery, but that, by so doing, mystery might be explained. The Incarnation and the Eucharist, its reflection, are Revelations. They are not mysteries. If they are "mysteries," they are only so in the mediæval sense of the word, that is, as dramas, or settings forth. Christ came to make manifest. He did not come to hide, He came to Reveal. The Incarnation and the Eucharist, therefore, must be Revelations. He took our flesh that by means of it He should make something known which was not known, not that by means of it He should make something unknown which was known. He did that which He did that thus we should come to know that which otherwise would remain to us unknown. He made a Revelation of God the Spirit by the only means it could be made known to us, that is, by a visible life. It was done for an object, and because it was needed, that we might become partakers of the Divine nature, that we might have "fellowship with the Father." Christ, the Son of God, became Son of man, that man by His doing so should rise to the Divine. In one sense man was so Divine, but Christ came that he might have this life "more abundantly." He chose our body to accomplish this; it was the means to the end, but

not the end; not that which it came to effect. It was the alphabet by which the Divine knowledge was to be spelt, but not so until spelt out. The body was the vehicle, in itself it had no intrinsic Godhead, no Divine nature but that which it conveyed. Do we not feel this double condition within ourselves? How different was, for example, Shakspeare's body from his mind! How little of the real Shakspeare is held by the tomb in Stratford? And so of higher things.

We have said that the root of most false conceptions of doctrine is to be traced to the error that Revelation is not light. But no doubt alteration in the meaning of words has had much to do with the birth and propagation of error, as again error has no doubt led to the alteration of the meaning of words, acting and reacting on each other in a very injurious way. Of this double kind of alteration there are many instances. Changes have taken place in the sense of the word "Mystery," which has been taken at different times to signify both to exhibit and to conceal. Justification has been made to take the sense of pardon instead of rectification; atonement of sacrifice, instead of reconciliation; incomprehensible, of unbounded; regeneration of conversion; and there are other instances. But no doctrine has suffered more from such changes than that of the Eucharist, and chiefly no doubt in connection with a false meaning given to the word Mystery.

Most modern errors in connection with the Eucharist have arisen from a wrong sense being given to this word,

from the use of it, that is, not in its old or ecclesiastical sense, of a showing forth or representation, but in its sense of being an unknowable or inscrutable thing. Yet does not the use of the word in this sense in connection with the Eucharist sever the Eucharist from its connection with Revelation? For if the Incarnation is a Revelation, so must be the Eucharist, for it is its reflection or echo. This may not at first strike us, for the word "Mystery," as applied to our relations with God, and signifying them to be incomprehensible or inscrutable, commends itself to us as a term suitable and becoming; and in connection with the Eucharist, particularly, its use is felt to be attended with propriety. For if "Mystery" (it is asked) "surround all our relationships with God, must it not do so most of all when He is, as here, specially present?" And, no doubt, all our relations with God are mysterious, in the sense of being infinite; and the ways and works of the Infinite are in their infinity beyond the range of all His creatures; external nature is full of mystery, we ourselves are full of mystery, we are surrounded with mystery, all things are mystery, in a high and true sense.

But the point to determine here is, whether the Incarnation and the Eucharist, on the subjects to which they relate, were given us as a help to remove Mystery (in the concealment sense of the word), or the reverse; to bring us nigh to God, by making Him known, or the reverse? We can only be brought nigh to God by making Him known. This, no doubt, will be conceded. Yet so strongly does the word

Mystery commend itself as significant of our proper relation with God, that although this in some sense will be conceded, yet the use of the word seems to carry with it a meritorious and dutiful character. But does not this feeling proceed from a false humility, from that humility which says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;" or from an unconscious Antinomianism which prefers a conventional to a direct and conscious connection with God's spirit? Yet such a sense designedly attached to the word in connection with the Eucharist destroys the connection between it and Christ as a Revelation.

But this sense of "Mystery," as applied to the Eucharist, and signifying incomprehensible, or inscrutable, is authorised, it will be said, by its occurrence in our formularies. No doubt the word occurs there, but in what sense? Is it not in the sense of Revelation? and is it not the case that when inserted there, it had the other and opposite meaning to concealment?—that "Holy Mysteries," did not mean holy concealments, but showings forth? And the same is true of its sense at that date, and use at that date elsewhere, as in our translation of the Bible for example, where the expressions "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh . . . . seen of angels," unquestionably signify Revelations or making known.

That there is a true use of the word Mystery, as signifying inscrutable, of course is not denied; but the question is, whether the object of Revelation was to increase or to

remove this condition? The object of the Gospel we hold to be was to remove this: is it not to make known the mysteries of God? And is not this the office of its preachers? The mysteries of Eleusis, for example, were mysteries to the uninitiated, but to those who were initiated they were no longer mysteries. And did not Christ come to do for us as to Providence that which the priests of Eleusis did for men as to their deities? Christ came to reveal heavenly mysteries, to remove, that is, mystery from God, so far as possible. Hence St. Paul's expressions to the Colossians, i. 25: "I am made a minister . . . . to fulfil (or fully make known or preach) the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made *manifest* to His saints."

Yet the use of the word, and the non-realization that Revelation must mean *revealing*, have led to an acceptance of meaning, as to the Eucharist, if it can be called *meaning*, which leaves the inference that its nature is not or cannot be known. And those who have distinct views themselves, and in the opposite direction, yet thoughtlessly circulate the idea by carelessly using phraseology which, if it means anything, means that "Mystery," or inscrutable, is a true definition of the Eucharist; the words of Queen Elizabeth, for example, which, if they have any meaning, have this, being often quoted with approbation:—

> "Christ was the Word that spake it,
> He took the bread and brake it:
> And what that Word did make it,
> So I believe, and take it;"

which saying, if it has any meaning, signifies that the Lord's meaning was unknown. Yet if this be the nature of Revelation, surely the gift of it was unnecessary; for that which it contains, if not needful to be known, might have been transacted beyond our sight. To what such a conception of Revelation may lead, and especially in connection with the Eucharist, we need scarce say, one example, at least, may suffice from a modern author, to show to what it led when he not unfairly describes to what it had brought a large portion of Christendom :—

"It is at present the professed belief of about four-fifths of the Christian Church," he says, "and was for some centuries the firm belief of the entire Church, that on a certain night the Founder of the Christian faith, being seated at a supper-table, held His own body in His own hand, broke that body, distributed it to His disciples, who proceeded to eat it, the same body remaining at the same moment seated intact at the table, and soon afterwards proceeding to the garden of Gethsemane."*

The same conception, we are sorry to say, we find re-echoed in one of our most popular hymnals :—

> "Jesus, with the law complying,
> Keeps the feast its rites demand;
> Then, more precious Food supplying,
> Gives Himself with His own Hand."

Such a conception of this as the meaning of the Eucharist could never have been accepted had the nature of Reve-

* Lecky's "History of European Morals," vol. i. p. 98.

lation been realized as being that of Light, and not of "Mystery," which is in this sense of darkness.

A conception which gives to matter the properties of spirit, and demands from matter spiritual results, reverses all the conditions by which knowledge is acquired, and upsets the basis whereon the knowledge which we have is founded. Such a conception, too, by destroying natural order, puts an end to the possibility as well as to the need of a Revelation. Accordingly we find that where this conception is absolutely held, all intelligent use of Revelation ceases, and with the intelligence, moral goodness also. For in nations where this conception prevails moral and intellectual truth having both become matters of uncertainty, spiritual debasement invariably follows. Where the Eucharist and the Incarnation become not the means whereby spiritual truth is manifested, but instrumentalities whereby spiritual truth is supposed to be produced by material causes, through a miraculous change wrought on matter, whereby it acquires the nature and property of spirit, and operates on the spirit apart from the spiritual channels, miracle becoming the rule, all true knowledge and morality are put out of court.

The first axiom as to Revelation must be, that it is a conveyance of knowledge.

The recognition and possession of this was the "profit" of the Jew. "We know whom we worship," says the Saviour, "for salvation is of the Jews." He makes salvation dependent on knowledge. If we apply this to materialistic

conceptions of the Eucharist, those who oblige us to worship a material body overthrow all this. For the conception of a "mystery" is inconsistent with knowledge. Nay, is it not of the nature of that mystery set before us in the Apocalypse, which is there called the mother of error—"Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

Nothing which has not the character of light can properly be called of the nature of Revelation,—still less can anything which lies near its centre be so. And the Eucharist sets forth the centre of Revelation. If it is dark, all the rest is darkness; if it is regarded as darkness, it is impossible that the meaning of the rest can be known. If the Eucharist be not regarded as light, all dependent upon recognising the meaning of the Incarnation becomes darkness; formulas take the place of light, letter of spirit, all becomes technical, substitutionary, artificial, the dead bury their dead, and Revelation becomes a *hortus-siccus*, a garden of dead flowers. Occupied with simulacra, the moonshine is preferred to the sunshine; busied with ropes and pulleys, we forget that the drama is on the other side of the stage. A religion hardened into mechanism stops of its own accord. But is it not such things—viz., a previous, but technical or mechanical, knowledge of Revelation—which have given rise to a materialistic Eucharist?

The word Atonement is one of those words which, used in a false or technical sense, has given a materialistic meaning to the Eucharist. Nay, a technical use of the word has

come to alter its very meaning. Signifying at first reconciliation, it has come to mean a sacrifice, and then a substitution—a substitution or acceptance of something instead of the thing itself. It was not thus in the beginning. For the word sacrifice, if connected with the Atonement in the sense of equivalent or substitution, was not then applied to the sacrifice of Christ. Nay, equivalent or substitution cannot apply to the sacrifice of Christ. His life and death were indeed a sacrifice, and a vicarious sacrifice, for us, but they were not an equivalent, nor a substitution for our lives. The Atonement was a doing away with sin, and a bringing in an everlasting righteousness; it was not equivalent or substitution for them. It was a sacrifice to produce, not to excuse; it was a sacrifice, a suffering of the just for the unjust, a sacrifice of humiliation and suffering on the part of God. But it was to be this for the removal of man's sin, and the incoming of his righteousness, by reconciling and rectifying humanity, in a true sense, not in an untrue; as an equivalent for man's guilt, or a substitution for his rectitude. We see that it does not remove punishment, or alter that which is past. The Atonement does not mean a dispensation, it means a fulfilment; and in this wise. The burden of man was sin; it was a burden upon God, upon the universe, and upon man. It could not be otherwise. It cannot but be felt so to be. It was so felt to God. He took steps to remove it—the necessary steps, the only steps. He took them willingly, He took them Himself. It was in His nature so to do, it would not have been in His

nature not to do so. He did that which was required, He made an Atonement. It was a reconciliation, but not a dispensation. God is Love and God is Righteous. He loved the world: He came to save it, it was meet and right so to do. He came to save the world in the only way it could be, by making it righteous. It was the only way possible. It was the only way possible for it, or for God. He had to do truly, not by artificial arrangement, not by legal substitution, but by a true healing or rectification. He did it by means: He did it by sacrifice; by the sacrifice of Himself. He did it where required, that is, in man's body. He came to seek and save that which was lost where it was lost; He found it where it was lost. He came into the world because His work lay there; He did it in man's flesh, because it was in the flesh His work had to be done, it was there that He had to find the lost. He found them there, and rectified them in that which was lost. He put them in the right way. He showed it in Himself. He goes before. Thus He saves the world. It is a real salvation or healing. It is not an unreal thing, it is no artificial arrangement, or bargain, or substitution, or equivalent of merit for demerit, or what is called a transaction; but a restoration or real change, by bringing the world to salvation by the knowledge of, and so fellowship with, God. It is done by a Revelation. By a Revelation which God sacrificed Himself to make. Thus only could He do it. He revealed Himself in Christ, in visible outgoings of love and righteousness, that man might see and feel

that which God is indeed. He did it in the highest degree, even unto death. He did it because nothing else would do, because, being what He is, He could not otherwise do. It was an action of Love, and He is Love. It was an action of righteousness, and He is righteous. It is called a work of merit: but merit is not a word to apply to the acts of God; and such a term cannot properly be coupled with the nature of God. We err when we apply the word merit to the nature of the Atonement. Its basis was Love and Righteousness—the love and righteousness of God; these, in their due exercise, cannot be connected with the idea of merit. God must ever be perfect in all He is or does—He or it can never be more or less so. Nay, Love and Righteousness enthrone themselves by being irrespective of desert. The Atonement was the outgoing of the Infinite Love and Righteousness accomplishing ends for man, irrespective of man's desert, accomplishing its ends by sacrifice; it was undeserved by man, it was a sacrifice beyond his heart to conceive, but as it was in full accordance with the nature of God we cannot rightly connect it with the use of the word merit.

The connection of the word "merit" with the Atonement has been in some respects unfortunate. Yet its introduction was very natural. It arose in this way. Before the Reformation, the use of the word had become perverted. Man's acceptance with God was taught to be dependent upon man's merit—a false basis, and a basis requiring a sufficient amount of the sufficiency of which no man could ever be sure

of the possession, and whereby, therefore, salvation was ever made practically uncertain. The Reformation destroyed this doubt. Luther "broke through into Heaven" (Bushnell well says) "at the place he called Justification by Faith." That is, Luther re-opened Heaven to man by discovering that man's hope towards God does not lie on that which is in man, but in that which is in God; that it is not that which is in man which saves a man, but that which is in God. Luther recognised that his own right standing with God was by this means: that is, through his own apprehension of God's unbought love and righteousness, of the character of God, that is; and by means of this apprehension he became a new or regenerated creature. He called the state that of "Justification by Faith," as St. Paul had done before him. Unfortunately, the word "merit" came in time to be mixed up with the conception. Abounding as it had done in the discarded theology, and believing that it had a place somewhere, it was transferred by most of the Reformers from where it used to stand, to the other side; that is, from the manward to the Godward aspect, where, if perhaps they did not think the word strictly applicable, they thought it would be less injurious. But time has shown that this is not the case. Nay, it is more than doubtful whether it has not been more injurious; whether, that is, it may not have evolved errors of a more difficult nature to deal with. For it is more than doubtful that if merit come to be associated with the nature of God, it does not go so far to upset all true notion of God. The doc-

trine of substitution, which grows out of this notion, has a tendency to destroy the true conception of God, and to put us into false relations with Him. It destroys our conception of His true nature, and virtually removes us from personal connection with God. The application of the word merit to the work of Christ also requires caution and definition; for if the conception of merit is inapplicable to God, and would remove His Divinity if applied to Christ, His work as human merely could not be taken as the ground of our acceptance with God. Were it possible, indeed, to suppose of Christ as a sinful man, by whose perfecting God had hopes for the perfecting of other men, such a view of merit in connection with His work might have been admissible. But this we know is out of possible thought.

The use of the word in connection with the Atonement requires care and definition, and it is not too much to say on this point that the phraseology adopted to meet the errors of the Church of Rome has raised up errors of equally or more dangerous character.

No doubt, merit, if by that is meant grace—and that is the true word to use throughout all this relation—may truly be said to be attributable to that initiative act on the part of God whereby it is that all good things are given; and more particularly for His interposition in Jesus Christ; but the false sense is so apt to swallow up the true, that on the whole the use of the word in this connection has been injurious. For any application of the word *merit* to the Incarnation must obscure the perfections of God. All that God does is

perfect. The Righteous is His Name. He cannot be righteous more or less. All His acts must be equally right —no one can be more so than another. Works of supererogation or default, therefore, cannot be attributable to God. And, again, as the works of Christ's human nature cannot afford a ground for such a stupendous result as the pardon of all sinful humanity, and while the two natures of God and man in Christ cannot be so confounded as by their mixture to give that which they cannot give alone—the use of the word merit, we think, should be avoided in connection with the Atonement.

To a false use of the word in this connection may be attributed some of the most wide-spread errors as to Revelation: errors which affect the "post" just as much as the "ante"-Reformation divinity, as we have said. "Merit" connected with man in ante-Reformation times, in post-Reformation times has come to be connected with God, in both cases with a bad practical result. And the result is the same, however the way be conceived of in which the merit is applied; whether, as in the Unreformed Churches, the application is supposed to be by means of sacraments, or, in the Reformed, by a mental process of belief, "clothing" its possessor with an imputed righteousness.

This last doctrine, that of acceptance on the ground of a substituted merit, has given rise to the conception that the human soul is not individually precious to God, or that the things desired by man in prayer, however good the things be in themselves, are yet not desired by Him for

our own or their own sakes. The consequence of this is, that individual relations with God are impossible. For when we must believe that we ourselves are not precious unto God, but are so only for the sake of another, we are shut from entrance to God as individual persons. If we do not apprehend that it is because God loved the world He gave His Son, and not because He gave His Son He loves the world, the individual preciousness and relation of man to God is obscured or lost, and Christ's work lies outside of us. And by this the true nature of the Atonement is destroyed. For by this the truth of God is misconceived; and the name of Christ, instead of being a key to open the doors of heaven, becomes but a spell wherewith to shut up or appease an angry God: and thus Christ ceases in truth to be truly one with God.

This misconception has for its root the substitution of the secondary for the primary power of Revelation; a substitution which, not giving us that which ought to be, is in doing so preventive of it. It is a substitution natural to man, springing naturally from his lower nature, in which it is easier for man to live than in his higher, to which, when called, he too frequently declines to come, preferring a lower seat, the position, that is, of a servant to a son, of debtor and creditor to child and father. God calls man to become a partaker of the Divine nature; but man, with a false humility, refuses, and says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He takes and makes a formula his God, and with this puts aside the highest and most

loving purpose of our Father. This virtual refusal of the Highest pervades our theology, as it does our natural religion, and in both cases severs us from the truth of our relations with God. For whatever deducts from the fulness of our conception of His love and righteousness, so far separates us from that true relation, for any lower conception of God than that which is the highest must have this effect. If the basis of morality is overthrown by the idea of a substituted or equivalent righteousness, not only does this involve the non-recognition of our individual preciousness, but all true conception of the righteousness and holiness of God is lost, and we are only saved from profanity in making our requests in this form, by our non-observance of its real nature. The error, no doubt, originates in our not considering that in which true righteousness consists. Were this recognised, the recognition of God's true character would rectify our own—but in the absence or reversal of a true conception of this, such consequence cannot follow. When, for example, it is said that the Divine Father is so "satisfied" with the righteousness of His Son, with "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," as an equivalent for man's righteousness, that He passes by the need of righteousness in man, surely it means that the Father is satisfied with something short of righteousness, thereby giving us a low view of the righteousness of God. It makes something to Him more important than righteousness. It accepts "the sacrifice of the Son" in lieu of it, or in place of man's punishment. It infers with

this that punishment is a final end, that the possession of a victim or substitute is sufficient, and is the meaning of the word Atonement. One would think it enough to prevent so terrible a misconception to observe that it implies that the nature and necessities of God's love and righteousness are less, and less righteous than our own. Yet every definition of the Atonement, which turns upon a basis of substituted merit, must be of this nature. Whether alien merit is made available by sacraments, or through a mental process of the receiver, it is the same thing, and both must equally tend to sever us from true personal dealings with God, by giving us a wrong conception of Him. Such a conception changes all that we naturally know and believe about God, as good and right, into darkness. All that we desire and feel about God, when our feelings and desires are highest and best, are changed by this conception into ignorance and emptiness, leaving us with an "unknown God," or one of whom, if this be a true conception, the less that is known, the better. Happily, from the logical conclusions required by such a belief, the artificial offspring of technical terms, men are mercifully saved in general by what remains in man of the Divine image, which gives him to know, with an instinctive recognition, that which must be the true character of God, and which, if left to itself, rules that all of God, and the Atonement itself, must be in accordance with this character. Yet, no doubt, when such misconceptions work themselves into the character of our lives, they produce an effect which, at the best, as they

cannot give, often are preventive of, that knowledge of God which is life eternal.

Yet it will be asked, Does not the negation of the propriety of the term of "merit," as connected with the Atonement, deduct from the gratitude and reverence which naturally accrue from such recognition of its nature? Is not the belief, it will be said, that it was for our own sakes, and from that which is in God's own nature (because He loves ourselves, and because the things we ask are in themselves agreeable to God that He hears us), likely to derogate from that which we owe to God in the Atonement? Is it not because of the necessity of something which He owed to Himself, rather than of something which He desired for us, lying at the base of the Atonement, a truer view, or one more likely to work out truer relations in us? We think not. To feel that that which was manifested in Christ is God's eternal nature, and because so, no exceptional act or variation, but the revelation of that which is ever there; that He did it for us and not for Himself, so far, we think, from diminishing, deepens our awe and gratitude, by laying the foundations of them in a more profound and deeper intelligence. Nay, we believe that the recognition of this aspect as the true is necessary for any real belief in the Divinity of Christ, or the true character of the Divinity. If Christ did that He did, by His own nature, then that nature is Divine. If He did it by another nature, then by that nature He became Divine. Either way we come to the Divine in Him; but if that He

did be not, neither is He Divine. But it is so, we feel. We recognise it by that which it is in itself. Christ gives us the nature of the Most High by showing the most high level. Because it is the most high it is no exceptional act, but an exhibition of that which always is—thus is it Divine, and that is Divine which it is. Christ gives us no lower ground for adoration than the highest, and his nature is ever at one level. Surely this gives us a deeper foundation than if He but exhibited the result of an exceptional will, and not the perpetual necessities of the Divine law? Our realization of its power will be in proportion to our realization of this fulness.

Christ's life, therefore, is the light of men, because of what it is, and what it is—is Light. It is what it is, by that it is, and what that is, is Divine. His life is light. By this life He came to give us "fellowship" with light; with light in its high places, even in the Most High. He could only do this by having what He had, and being what He was. He could only show it, by having it Himself. He manifested it because He had it, He showed that which the Father is, by being that which the Father is, and thus enabled us to drink at the same fountain. What that is we know. What does not give us to know this we do not know: it is not of it. What does not give light is no part of Christ. The conception that Christ is, or is given us in, a "mystery" is destructive of the true conception of Christ and the objects of His mission. Any notion of the Eucharist based upon this

must be false. For such a notion neither gives us fellowship, nor admits of it. Mystery is destructive of fellowship. Yet this demand for mystery takes high ground; it says that by it only have we the Real Presence of God! Yet presence of what? A body which is not the subject of knowledge cannot be the body of God. Such body, at the best, must be "unknown." But God's "Real Presence" to to us must be different. The condition of such presence is that it is known. "We know what we worship" is the distinction taken by the Saviour between true worship and false; the true worship and presence, therefore, are dependent on knowledge. True worship is based on true knowledge. Acceptable worship is founded on right recognition, the recognition of God as a Father. Those who know God best, feel most how precious that Presence is, how blessed anything is which brings us nearer to Him: but they also will feel most how great the mischief and impropriety are of anything being received instead of this, or anything which is preventive of it And such know that a physical substance, which is not the subject of knowledge, cannot be that knowledge which gives "fellowship," and is not something which gives God's presence, but must stand in the way of it. Such feel that a localization of the infinite is impossible. They will joyfully approach the Eucharist, but this not because it sets forth a limited and localized Presence, but because it shows forth a Presence which is not localized, and is everywhere present, and always the same. They will rejoice, not at an arbitrary Presence, the

result of an isolated act, but at a Presence which is never absent, and which, once seen upon the cross, is seen everywhere. They will revere the Eucharist as a gauge of the Eternal, and a pledge of its nature. They will approach it with reverence, because of what it is. But they will do this because of that they know, and not because of that they know not. Knowing God in Christ, they understand the Eucharist. Having this knowledge, they draw nigh, and find that which they know, with which they offer themselves upon the altar, even as He there set forth once offered Himself, and still does do so; they will draw nigh by that which is most high within them, not in spite of, but because of knowledge.

A mistaken view of the Atonement and a false application of the doctrine of merit cannot but lead to false conceptions of the Eucharist; and to the conception of a technical and substitutionary Atonement, a materialistic Eucharist is a necessary consequence. The steps are manifest. They commence with a demand for an outward and invariable organization of the Church. The existence of the Church, as a body instituted by Christ for the conversion of the world, is supposed to depend upon, and to be tested by, its continuous visible presence; Christ's presence with it is supposed to depend on its material organization; if its presence is material, its sacraments must needs be material also. Christ instituted a body, it is said, to convert the world. He fixed its office-bearers. He sent them forth. He was to be with them to the end of time.

They were to connect those they gathered to themselves into one body, one with Him and with each other by material Sacraments; that which *they* did, accomplished this, that which *they* did *not* do, does not accomplish this. His presence must be real, as the Sacraments are real; as the Sacraments are real, so is His presence. He gave Himself on the cross; He gives Himself in the Eucharist. What He was on the cross He is there. With that view of the Atonement, which supposes Christ to have offered on the cross an equivalent for sin and a substitution for the righteousness of the world, it follows that the same conditions are present in the Eucharist, the conclusion is in accordance with the premisses, but the premiss is unsound.

When the Atonement comes to be conceived of as an offering made to God, whereby, on the grounds of Christ's sufferings, God can pass from the awards due to sins, and because of this forgive them, the conception soon passes into the idea that the same equivalent is offered in the Eucharist; but this is not a true conception of the Atonement.

For the postulate that it was the sufferings of Christ which are the ground of our acceptance with God, is based upon the false conception of an equivalent of suffering, enabling God to dispense with an amount of righteousness, and that the means whereby the suffering was obtained is the thing to be had. That means was the body of Christ. A substitutionary Atonement leads accordingly to a substitutionary Eucharist. And such a Eucharist became the test

of the true Church; a true Church administering a true Eucharist—an Eucharist like itself. The true Church has the true body. The true body is with the true Church. It is a visible Church, it is a visible body. The body offered by a visible ministry must be visible, continuous visibility is the test of both; if visible, it is real, yet not otherwise. How natural was it to transform the virtual into the actual, the bill into the gold! It is the test of solvency. But the same result is ever in some form present when letter is substituted for spirit. A technical parent ever produces materialistic offspring. It is instructive to observe how a root error of this sort reproduces in filial error, wherever it is adopted, similar always in kind, whether the manifestation be in a materialistic Eucharist, or (that which is in principle the same thing) a substitutionary righteousness.

But to suppose that a materialistic change in the Eucharist, whereby it is to become the conveyance of spiritual knowledge, is to violate the conditions of knowledge, and to relegate God into the unknown; to hold that this is the true meaning of the Eucharist is impossible. For the first object of Revelation being to bring us nearer unto God, a conception of the Eucharist which does not do this cannot be the true one; for the Eucharist, as a portion of Revelation, must come under the conditions of Revelation itself: it must be, that is, a conveyance of light, and produce its results by its instrumentality; it must bring us to the Spirit by spiritual means. It was intended to do so. How is it done? Let us look at the Eucharist as it is now set

forth among us, and we shall gather how it is done. The priest, or minister, sets apart certain portions of bread and wine. He confers a character upon them by doing so. He does not change their substance, else we should see the change, for this is a matter of sense, following the act; this is not done: he gives it therefore but a *character*—something which is of the nature of mind, and cognizant by it. He does this by connecting the elements by knowledge with the life and death of Christ. He invests them with the narrative of His passion. He institutes them thus to show forth the life and death of Christ, as they were seen at Jerusalem. His Death and Passion there, are represented in the Eucharist; it is the exhibition of a tremendous fact in the Divine nature,—it is a Revelation of the Divine mind as to sin and sinners. Christ's body is the vehicle of that Revelation. The manifestation was in Jerusalem; it is reflected in the Eucharist, as a remembrance of that which was done before, as the commemoration of the form in which the Divine Charity was manifested on earth—as it ever is in the Divine nature. The life and death of Christ are the light of men; that light is mirrored in the Eucharist. The Incarnation is the Revelation of God; its shadow is seen in the Eucharist. The Revelation is the *res incarnationis;* both at Jerusalem and in the Eucharist. It was not Christ's natural body which was this; but that which conveyed or showed forth; it is the same in the Eucharist. Both testify to a meaning which is beyond themselves. Both are telescopes to bring God nigh, but they are not

that which they bring. In no case can a body be more than a medium through which a spiritual Revelation comes. If we do not recognise this, we miss its use, and its object is not fulfilled. If we fall down to worship the instrument, it is evidence that we know not its use, and that, as yet, we have seen nothing.

Bodily substance can alone enter into relation with spirit, by the spirit which it conveys. This is that which was done by the body of Christ. His life in our body gives light, by its acts, as to the Divine nature.

Now no so-called "mystery" can do this. A miracle cannot bring us nigh to God, save by giving us a revelation of His character. Nothing which does not convey and commend His character can bring us into true relations with God. Turning the water into wine at Cana would not have brought those present nearer unto God (in the sense of fellowship), more than the miracles of the Egyptian magicians did, had it not been that therein God was seen in His benevolence. No miraculous change in the substance of the Eucharist would bring us nearer unto God, unless by means of knowledge it revealed something significant and commendatory of character; no conception of the Eucharist, which does not involve the nature of *Revelation*, can do it. Such result can be effected alone by means of the understanding. What, then, is meant by a Real Presence, when a material presence is spoken of, and this one of which we are not conscious? St. Paul cannot have thought Christ's Presence in the Eucharist was of this nature,

when he said he had a "desire to depart, and to be with Christ." He did not suppose a bodily Presence in the Eucharist. He desired to depart to be with that. He expected to see Christ, but not in the Eucharist. What do we expect then when we demand Christ's bodily presence there? Do we realize what we demand? what is the presence demanded by the mass of the Roman communion? Let us give its description in detail, in words, however, which we cannot quote, but in their native Latin.*

Can Christ have such a body now? Where could such a body be? It may be said, that Christ in returning to resume His terrestrial body in the Eucharist, may do as those meteors which, when far off and out of sight, are immaterial or invisible, but which take on material and visible forms when they are terrestrial and come in contact with this atmosphere. But in the case under consideration there is no such presence visible as in these; in the materialistic conception of the Eucharist there is no sensible bodily

* "'Sunt sub quâlibet specie—partes omnes substantialiter integrantes Corpus Christi, eo modo conjunctæ, qui ad perficiendum corpus humanum necessarium est: quia Corpus Christi non est mutilum, nec monstrosum sed pulchrum et ornatum; *et ideo capillos etiam habet, et barbam*, quia hæc etiam pertinent ad integritatem et intrinsecum ornamentum humani corporis: *sunt denique cum sanguine reliqui humores*, quia omnes sunt de veritate corporis humani ideoque in glorioso corpore existunt.'

"Suarez proceeds to express his opinion that the included air of the Sacred Body is most probably present, and then adds:—'Secus verò dicendum est de aliis rebus merè extrinsecè et accidentaliter conjunctis, quales fuerunt in nocte cœnæ vestes, quæ nullo modo componunt humanum corpus, sed adjacent extrinsecus, item saliva, cibus indigestus, et excrementa, quæ tunc fortasse erant in corpore Christi.'"—Vol. III., Dissert. I., sec. 1, p. 632, co 1, B. 6. Quoted by Cazenove in his Essay on the Reformation (App. p. 83).

manifestation. It is a body, therefore, without the conditions of body, a spirit without the conditions of spirit!

If a localized Presence is demanded, however, and reasons are sought on the subject, those who make the demand, and seek to make it acceptable by arguments drawn from reason or illustrations resting on reasonable grounds, use unnecessary trouble, as do others with them, for the foundation of such assumption is that a presence such as is contended for, is not based on reason, but lies outside, and is wholly independent of that ground. Such conception rests on the basis of authority exclusively; and is dependent upon no other; if that be sufficient, that is all that is required; whether that *be* a sufficient ground is another question, and which we at this time need not discuss. We may not think the ground sufficient, but it is for those to consider its sufficiency who rest their case upon it. And to tell the truth, they do not in general shrink from avowing its sufficiency, on the contrary, they seem to possess a pleasure in the contemplation of it, and to acquire, as it were, a sense of merit from its use; a pleasure and sense which appear to augment in proportion to the difficulties which, on the score of reason, they have to be overcome. Yet the experience of the results of such a principle ought to warn them of their peril. For no disuse nor violation of reason ever goes without its retribution, and such themselves cannot but see that those who rest upon authority as their sole guide and test of spiritual things, never attain to right spiritual things,

or spiritual things, properly speaking, at all. They *cannot*, indeed, for *their* region lies, and must lie, beyond that of authority, which although it may be introductory to, never can be more than this, never can be the things themselves, or give experience of them; so that we ever see those who rest on this principle alone, complain that they have nothing when they are in purely spiritual regions,—complaining, as the Roman soldiers did in the Temple of Jerusalem, that there is no God, because they see no image or representation of Him.

The character and object of Christ's Presence in the Eucharist must be ruled by what God is Himself. It is no doubt a Real Presence, not the creation, that is, of our own will, but something else. What is it then? Christ as One with God, must be ever the same, and therefore ever present. He must be so present in the Eucharist. He is so. If He is specially present, He can only be so to our consciousness. Thus is He present in prayer both individually to us, and when two or three are gathered together in His name. In all He is the same God and Christ, everywhere equally present, but present in each case only as our different cognitions and consciousness require. While generally, He is also specially present; but the speciality is in us; He is the first, we are the second. He is present generally, as light fills a landscape; but then we take it in with our own eyes. His presence must ever be the same, but then it is seen and differenced by our own different consciousnesses and desires. We make the speciality; that

cannot be in God. His presence in the Eucharist must be ruled by this. A material Eucharist cannot make a difference for a material Eucharist—cannot be the Person of God. And that which is spiritual is subject to the conditions of spirit. It is present to the spirit of the receiver, seen with the spiritual eye, received with the spiritual mouth: differenced by the receiver by his own spirit. And if, as truly says the Protestation appended to our Communion Service, "It is against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one," if Christ's material body cannot be present in the Eucharist, no bodily presence can be there at all. If Reason be our rule, beyond this we cannot go: unfortunately, those who take other views do not allow this influence.

Coming as Christ did to show the Father, and by Revelation to give fellowship with the Father, no Eucharist which does not do this can be accepted by those who have this fellowship; no Eucharist, that is, which makes God "unknown." Those who have come to know God by Christ cannot retrace their steps, therefore, to a mysterious, localized, and earthly oracle, which speaks to them of darkness from the dark. To do so would be to annul what they know, the Revelation which they have received, and to return to the condition of the disciples. In point of fact, those who do this show us how "expedient" it was that Christ's body should go away, that the Spirit should come.

But the nature and superiority of spirit is one of the

lessons last learnt by mankind. Do we not see this everywhere? Even when God is truly known, this true knowledge cannot be transmitted, so as to give the thing itself. We may give the consequence, we cannot secure that which it should convey. In the experience of years, let us say, do we not observe one ancestor start a spiritual religion, the next is occupied with its manifestations, the third builds its sepulchre. It would seem as if religious growth had a process akin to that we see in nature,—first a life, then a manifestation, then decay. Too often we see a family known for what need to be called Evangelical religion, their children formalists, their grandchildren ending in infidelity. How many examples of these stages, how many families of late have we not seen go through these phases before our eyes in England! At present, how many are in the second stage, passing on to the third! And the root-cause is this, when in religion the second stage is taken for the first—the result for the producing cause. If the producing cause is unfelt, its manifestations are taken for the thing itself, and are supposed to be religion, and summaries and rites are taken for Christ. Revelation no doubt requires means, and means rightly used will reproduce their own origin; but the origin is seldom realized as the one thing needful, and the means are rested in as all. That Divine nature which Revelation was intended to convey, comes by a knowledge which produces in us a new nature by the production in us of a new spirit, as it is written, "It is eternal life to know thee, the only true God;" and Revelation being this, a manifestation

of God in the face of Jesus, an unveiling of God's nature in Him, is that which produces this effect, by giving us knowledge of God, and so sympathy with His purposes. Such knowledge does not alter the substance of God's laws, or change the circumstances of life; but it so alters their meaning and character to us, by giving us to know from whom they come, and the excellence of His character, that we are delivered from the bondage of law, that is, from dislike to it. To do this was the main object of Revelation. If this be not recognised, no other conception of Revelation will benefit us: no technical summary, no materialistic rite. The power of such lies, if they be true, in the knowledge of what they mean; and if that meaning be not realized, summary or rite will signify nothing, and may come into the place of this which would. But here, in connection with this, we often see a strange phenomenon: that the meaning of a rite or summary not being realized, on their acceptance a sense of merit arises. This sense of merit on receiving, or resting on the thing without realizing benefit from that which is its meaning, will explain to us why the use of summaries and rites, used in an external and quasi-magical nature, is resorted to in times of need; why, for example, we often see death-beds attempted to be consoled by the recitations of creeds and administration of rites apart from the realization of that meaning which is their object.*

* See, as to this mistaken use of creeds, Dr. Newman's dream of Gerontius; the Athanasian Creed defended after a military fashion by the Poles; the Mahometans writing and swallowing passages from the Koran, and familiar examples among ourselves.

This use of Revelation in its secondary aspect (that of resting on and expecting benefits from its forms used in an outward or magical way) ends in the loss of the primary meaning altogether. For the true meaning of Revelation is to give us "fellowship" with God through knowledge, and Christ cannot be "meat indeed" to such as conceive God to be reached by a material medium, corporeally received. Nay, by such a conception God is shut out. No such reception can give eternal life. For the life of the soul is dependent on knowledge, and in no sense can receiving a material substance which is not the subject of knowledge give us to receive of it. Life is a thing of consciousness, and we cannot but be conscious of a life we have, or we have it not, if we are not conscious of it. However "tremendous" the "mystery," therefore, which is supposed physically to unite us with God, such incorporation cannot give us God's life; at the best, it can only make us one with the physical body of Christ, and to do this was not the mission of the Divine Son, but to give us fellowship with the Father. If there be no such "fellowship" there can be no true communion, and if no true communion, what is the Eucharist? and what the Real Presence? To discern the Lord's Body is indispensable, but this cannot be realized in such an Eucharist.

God and His ordinances, as we have said, must take their nature from that which He is Himself. They must take their character from His character, and their nature from His. We must come to them by that we know of

Him. He reveals Himself to us in Christ because we are capable of such a Revelation, and all that is dependent on it must be ruled by this. We are capable of receiving such a Revelation, for we are reflections of that which He is, and that which we have came from Him. To this He speaks. Made in the Divine image, He calls it out in us by Christ. He shows us in Him that which He is Himself, and that which therefore we are to be. We cannot but worship this when it is thus shown; for in it we see cause of worship. The manifestation of the Divine Nature in Christ is such as to draw us to worship, that we see by that which is most high within ourselves. No arbitrary nature is there exhibited, willing a thing because of will; we see it willing it because of what it is, and because that is good. Our wills follow such a will when we see what it is. Christ manifests God, demanding no obedience merely because of will, but because of that which the will is. He manifests God willing the Eternal Good, and our wills follow such a will. It is salvation to have this will. Man had ceased to see this, that it is in the nature of things; and accordingly the ministry of our Lord is filled with surprise that the true character of Providence is not seen by man, or that if seen its will is not done. "Ye can discern the signs of the skies," He says, "but not of the times;" ye can discern, that is, physical, not moral law. And that we have power, He infers when He says, "When I tell the truth, why do ye not believe me?" The evidence of His putting away mere personal will as apart from that on which

the will is based, on that which is in the thing itself, is present when He says, "Whosoever does the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." He exalts here right, as it were, above personality; He asserts, indeed, that right and the Eternal Personality are one, and that the Divine personality is founded in right. But He sets aside personal affection, as such, unless it be founded on that which is known of the person, on the good that is in him. "Daughters of Jerusalem," He says, "weep not for me, but weep for yourselves." He demands, that is, no personal obedience save on the ground of the excellence of the object. He directs attention to this, as that on which all true worship must be founded, on what the things are in themselves, that is, on their intrinsic goodness. "Blessed is the womb that bare thee," He allows to the woman who so exclaimed, yet He infers that there would be no real benefit from the connection, save from unity in goodness. He infers that personal connection is of no benefit, unless accompanied with moral union. And, indeed, what benefit would it be to him who is dying of disease, to know that he is the king's cousin?

Christ reveals that which God is, and gives us to see His excellence, that our service and worship may be free from seeing the excellence of the object, that the worship may be spontaneous and obligatory only at it is excellent. He shows God as worthy of worship, by showing the high moral nature of God. He tells us that this is the cause of the Divine blessedness; He says that having it will enable

us to partake in that blessedness. God is blessed by what God is; we are to be blessed in the same way, and by being what He is. Recognising this, we are to seek the same nature, for our salvation is to consist in our having the character of God. Christ came to declare this, and as many as receive His declaration, to them gives He power to possess what He declares. This power, innate before in man, for no doubt man is the offspring of God, and in a true sense we are His, becomes doubly so, and we are the sons of God with a double power (with the freedom and enjoyment of sons), when our will unites freely with the will of God, as seen in Christ. This sonship, latent in every man, is called out by Him. One in kind before called in Christ, by Him we are called to come up higher, to be sons come of age, to be no longer under tutors and governors; but one with Him, of whom it is written that "He who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Taking our flesh and dwelling among us, in Christ, out of Egypt He calls His Son to Zion. Sons before, we require this quickening voice to realize that which we are, and to arise from the far-off country to the presence and power of the Father's House. Belief in Him and in that House is the hope and strength of all God's offspring.

But our strength and rest are not to be in the development of anything within ourselves, but by our laying hold on that which is for us in God, and which is always ours;

in the eternal nature of things, in the fact that God is our Father, and that we are His children by an indestructible relationship. He who receives this, and as he receives it cannot sin, is born of God, and as he lives in this he cannot go back to a lowef faith or practice; he has an unction which forbids him so to do; he cannot forget that which he has seen and heard, he cannot deny that he has known God. Nay, as man knows God he rises to a higher state, becoming ever a new and higher creature, and an everlasting righteousness is brought in as man is connected with God. To effect this Christ came into the world; this His work is now going on in it. He is purging the world by the manifestation of God. By His life and death He is giving us a Revelation of God, and brings mankind into unity with Him, by taking "the manhood into God." He took our flesh to fill us with His spirit, and by this means to open heaven. We mistake His mission, if we take the instrument for the object, the key for that it opens. Yet is not this done when the instrument becomes the object of adoration? And, alas, in how many countries, and for how many years has not this been done, when the earthly Body of the Lord is made the great, if not the sole object of adoration! When the suffering flesh, the real Body (as it is called), is the sum and crown of religious worship. Why, Marriage rites are performed by it, and miraculous cures are attributed to this body, the body in the Eucharist! Not the sufferings of God at sin, but the physical sufferings of Christ; not the sorrows of God for

sinners, but Christ's human sufferings as such, are the things which too often call forth the greatest, if not the only, sympathy and veneration. Yet was this the object of Christ's Revelation? Is not this to miss it? does not this bring darkness into its place? Surely Christ did not come to set up His Body as the object of worship, or to present our flesh to us in a new and mysterious form? His object surely was, as we have so often said, by taking our flesh to give us an understanding of spirit, that we might know God who is true, in the only way He can be truly known, and by this to enthrone God in our hearts by manifesting Him as worthy of worship. Yet for how long have not the fairest portions of Europe been debarred from this by something being substituted in its stead; by a darkness instead of light, a darkness which, in Asia, has led to the preference of Mahometanism, and in Europe of materialism! But is it wonderful? If the conditions of knowledge are overthrown, and the base falls, the superstructure must follow, and the reversal of our means of knowledge must overthrow knowledge; and with intellectual, moral truth follows. When the light becomes darkness, how great then is the darkness! how doubly great when Christ becomes the cloud!

Yet let us hope that many have received Christ, even in a limited and perverted sense; and so sufficiently received Him, even by a darkened Eucharist, as to receive blessing, something, that is, which if not giving the fulness has yet given something. For under most Eucharistic error there

lies a perception that Christ's work, whatever it was, proceeded from love of God to man, and that the initiative being with Him, a warrant is given for our approach, a warrant which, although badly read, yet involves a drawing nigh. In the lowest view of the Eucharist a divine love is felt contemplating and assisting man, and although its method and objects may not be precisely known, yet let us hope that the end is often reached. Many difficulties are overcome by overleaping them, and a willing, if not an intelligent, obedience is sometimes brought in, without much apprehension by the reason. Yet, alas! how different a state is this from that which is the product of faith founded on knowledge, of the knowledge of what God is, and does, as seen in Christ. It is all the difference between the Law and the Gospel, between service and sonship, between freedom and bondage! When the true meaning comes to a man, he feels himself in a larger room. If a technical and artificial conception be taken away, he finds that more is given than was taken; if a materialistic body is taken, another is given of a higher nature, a body which, although it cannot be touched as real and we seem to have nothing, yet in reality gives all things. Such say no more, "Lo here! or lo there!" for they find God everywhere present and the same, and they are at rest. Finding in themselves a response to the Revelation that God is Father, they desire no other inheritance, in that they ever have the haven where they would be, and a real presence. A limited presence to such is felt to be impossible, for everywhere

they are filled with all the fulness of God, and God as seen in Christ.

It is by some such exchange as that, perhaps, that all do come to any true knowledge of God. For we must ever rise from lower to higher. Love itself is a thing of degree, growing by that it feeds on, and as an original love is revealed, the increase of the respondent follows. We go from nature to providence, from providence to grace, and in grace from strength to strength, the earthly ministering to the heavenly; until the earth itself is transformed into the elements of the world which is to come. Do we not find within ourselves this experience? Is it not so seen in others? One basis is common to all; for all that we know that God is, is by knowing that which we ourselves should be. We are made in God's image, and called to participate in the Most High; by this nature we are capable of and called to judge, to judge that which is without by that which is within, to discern, to receive, or to reject it. Christ by His life and death calls out heights and depths to which but for His calling we should not have known, but which we respond to by that which is within ourselves.

Yet Christ carries us beyond ourselves into that which is more high, into a higher presence. When He calls us to "fellowship" with God, He throws a door wide which was but so in part before. The Revelation of a Father, if it does not produce, yet develops a Son: and the heart of a Son calls out that of a Father. Deep calls to deep in an eternal flow. God commends Himself as we know Him,

and so the hallelujahs are eternal. We cannot exhaust God. "Before all things, therefore," says the Book of Proverbs, "get knowledge of God." It is the object of Revelation to give this. It was the work of Christ. He gave the Revelation, He allows it to work its course. He shows us God, and we worship that we see and know. Other worship than that founded on knowledge and sympathy there can be none. For no true worship of the human spirit is based on ignorance, or the contradiction of that we know. Let us thank God that it is so, and that our cause of worship is that it is not the Revelation of an arbitrary will, but the Revelation that the will is based on good.

Whatever is not light, as we have said, is not of the nature of a Revelation; and so far as a thing does not reveal, it militates against it; a demand is made for something contrary to Revelation, and a demand made contrary to, is a denial of Revelation. Let us not confuse the worlds of spirit and matter, lest we do this and take away the basis of that knowledge, that which Christ came to give; if the miraculous be made the rule, Christ's Revelation is of no effect.

If Revelation is to be as an opening of our eyes to see the meaning of God's ways, any object which turns this aside must be Antichrist. Those who do not see its object, do not see this, and not seeing this, hug their chains. They say they see nothing, if they have nothing. Accordingly we ever hear such—and it is the proof of their darkness and real unbelief—demanding proofs for the authen-

ticity of Revelation, miracles, authority, &c.—to demonstrate the truth of that, which, if not true and seen without, is not true, or seen at all. Such miss the spiritual kingdom by looking for it where it is not to be found, and seeking a material basis for a spiritual world. They do not realize that the true proof of a spiritual thing must be in the thing itself, and that missing this, they miss the spiritual kingdom. This blindness and mistake explains also why that kingdom is relegated to the future. It is postponed because not known. Heaven is made hereafter because its nature is supposed to be different from that which is. The unseen is supposed to be different from the seen in kind, yet surely Goodness, Holiness, Truth, are all of one and eternally the same, one here, as hereafter. To make the spiritual kingdom a thing of time, to make it depend on visibility, or the reversal of ordinary laws, is to misconceive or destroy its nature. And what has not such a conception produced—a church of popes and eucharists, real presences which were so far false as real—of which it may be predicated that if visibility is reality, the reality is not good, but evil, a kingdom which it was the object of Revelation to supplant. Christ came to reverse all this. He came to give us an eternal kingdom, and because this, unseen; not depending, that is, on visible proofs. Revelation gives an indestructible kingdom, one of which the tests are invisible; a heavenly not an earthly kingdom; a kingdom whose foundations are beyond the radius of this, and therefore not dependent on its conditions. This is Christ's kingdom;

the kingdom which He came to found. He came to set up not a temporal, but an eternal kingdom; and if eternal then in its basis invisible. He came to give us the meaning of things seen, to show us the Father in the law-giver; to reconcile us to law, to enable us to choose freely the moral good; to deliver us from the curse of law, that is, the obligation of receiving it against our will, by giving us a will for it: He enables us to make it ours by choice. And this He did by manifesting the character of the Lawgiver, by showing what He is, and that it is trust-worthy. Thus He gives us rest. It was His mission. He did not come to give us a new thing; a new law, new circumstances, or any mode by which we might escape these; nor, again, any way by which God might be saved from the application of law to us. He came to reconcile us to law, by reconciling us to God, by showing that He and His Laws are good, by giving us "the preparation of the Gospel of Peace," that is, a deliverance not from penalty, but setting us above penalty by enabling us to fulfil the law, and submit to its righteous operations. This light is the light of men. He enlightened us as to the Lawgiver, by showing what He is; and by His own life testifying that the will of God is good, testifying this in the midst of outward misery which that law was inflicting on Himself; leaving us with this His testimony, if received, to work our cure. The reality of His conviction of the goodness of Law we cannot doubt. For His justification of God's law was not founded upon His own escape from, but on His

undergoing its penalties and requirements. He submitted to its righteous operation as righteous. He naturally, indeed, shrank from it. He cried, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and, "O my Father, if it be possible, take this cup from me." He felt the pain, yet He submitted, and that truly. Once, indeed, He reversed it, but, as it were, apologised. At the supernatural raising of Lazarus, he pleaded that He did so "because of them that stood by." But His life was spent in honouring the law. He showed that honour even unto death. And this because He knew God to be a Father. He knew the source of law; that it is good, that from the same fountain comes not sweet water and bitter, that if bitter it is medicinal. He knew the Lawgiver as worthy of honour. He knew Him as a Son ever with the Father, a son with the spirit of a son. To testify of God in this sense was the object of His coming. "For this cause," says He, "I came into the world." "O righteous Father," He exclaims, "the world hath not known Thee,"—inferring that if it had, things would have been different. Knowing what knowledge would do, He came to give it, and by giving it to regenerate the world; He came to bestow knowledge of the truth, that thereby the world might have life everlasting. He revealed it that we might have it. He gave light that we might have life; to bring us unto God, by showing what God is, manifesting the Father by the Son, that we might have the Spirit. This was the mind of Christ. What He was, He desired that we should be.

His "mind" was His happiness. It must be ours; that is, to have this mind. It is needful if we would be saved, for there is no other happiness possible for such as we. It is heaven to have this mind, an immediate heaven: not a heaven hereafter, a future heaven, one capable of postponement; but one now; and which if we have not now, we have not at all; which if we think we can postpone, we do not understand; which if we have, we know we have; which if we know not that we have, we have not; but which we have, just as and when we recognise God as Christ did—as our Father. That mind is heaven. Heaven is ours as we have it, not ours as we have it not; ours if we have it, not ours if we have it not. It cannot be deferred, if we have its conditions we have its enjoyment, for its enjoyment is in what it is, and that is immediate if it is at all. To interpose something between us and its enjoyment, manifests that we have not, neither understand it. Christ rejoiced because of the kingdom—because He had it—because He was One with the Father; for that is it, to be one or at one with the Father—and this comes because what the Father is, and our knowing it. Christ knew what God was, and in the knowledge he rejoiced. That God was His Father was His ground for rejoicing; it is the only intelligent ground of ours. But to be ours, we must know it. The kingdom is dependent on knowledge. How shall we know? We ought to know the kingdom is ours by birthright; it ought to be ours by heart. Whatever truly reveals God ministers to it. Whatever does not do this, is

beside the question, or hinders its possession. Means and ordinances which have no light, or from which the light has departed, are of this nature. Light is the watershed which marks off here the truth from error, which shows the place where the truth lies. Where light ceases Revelation ceases. Light marks off the true from the false. Wherever means slope off into darkness, error commences. Ordinances once full of light may pass over into darkness; when they do this, when they cross the watershed of light, they are not of the kingdom. Yet is not this often the case with the Eucharist?

Yet even when misconceived, it has a mighty power. Why is it so? What makes the Eucharist a power, even when wrongly conceived? What is that root which keeps it alive, and even renders it a blessing, where there is little realization of its highest meaning? No doubt that instinctive conviction which it carries, and of which we have spoken, that it is a manifestation of the will of God for good; that it shows forth a Love in God to man, although the mode of its operation be not understood.

This, when firmly present, renders the Eucharist a blessing even in the midst of error, so that those who thus mainly recognise it as a token of love have some true communion, although, no doubt, its nature is limited; for in the midst of misconception, such feel that in the revelation of God's Love they have that they need.

But it will be said this is the view held in those countries where the Eucharist is the "Mass." Yet not so. For there

it is coupled with conditions which destroy this aspect, although we believe that in some cases these even may be broken through. Were this the view where the Eucharist is the Mass, little objection could be taken to it. But it is not so. There it is simply viewed as a mystery, or taken as a charm, to avert the Divine wrath, a view which must hinder us from, instead of bringing us truly nigh to God. As a representation of Christ upon the cross, as a revelation of God saying, "I am He whom ye seek," "It is I, be not afraid,"—the great "I Am" speaking from the cross, "Look to the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are dug," the view of the Eucharist a mystery can do nothing. But yet when the Eucharist is set forth as an exhibition of the Incarnation, of God when present in the flesh—of the mode in which He was weary and heavy laden—of what He was and is in spirit, it is much. As a representation of this, it may call out all manifestations of reverence. Regarding it simply as such, we grudge not that every knee should bow—that royal honours be paid, incense rise, drums beat, and cannons thunder; that standards be lowered, and armed men ground their arms; that the kings of the earth bring their honour and glory to its temple; that the finest gems and gold adorn and beautify, the richest robes be worn in the sanctuary where, high over all, the representation of Christ is enthroned,—it is the commemoration of the Incarnation. And yet more, when set forth at a simple communion board, where the white linen shines through the stormy darkness, and the worshippers meet on

the bare hill-side, amid the cries of wild birds, the roaring of the sea, and where the coming tempest is less feared than the arrival of the persecuting soldiery. Or yet again, when, by the pillow of the dying saint, Christ's minister conveys to his trembling lips that viaticum with which the poor traveller is to start on his otherwise dark and solitary journey, but who with this companionship is helped and lightened; the rod and staff of the Lord comforting him, giving him a gauge and strength in the dark waters, by showing where He had been, and therefore he may go. This is indeed an Eucharist, and one which helps more than he who is departing: for those whom he leaves behind, around his couch, follow him, with this, in his invisible track, and are kept together by that clue. They no longer indeed see their friend, it may be he sees not them; but yet the Eucharist binds them together in one, in it they are still one because of its Great Foundation, one who is the companion of all, and in Whom, though apart, they can still hold each other when out of sight. This pledge of the Lord over all is, no doubt, blessed. To such an Eucharist no objection can be made. Such a belief glorifies the Supper of the Lord with a Kingly presence, while it saves it from false and unreal conceptions. But then it does this by means of knowledge, not by ignorance; by means of knowing, not by means of not knowing, what we do. This benefit is by our understanding, not in spite of it; we are helped by light, not by darkness, by Revelation, not by Mystery.

The object of Christ's Incarnation was to give us "fellowship with God:" it is a revelation of the Father, by the Son. A materialistic conception of the Eucharist is not this, but an opaque body coming between us and this light. It is a conception therefore to be avoided; having its root in a technical and false view of the Atonement, which it continues in a materialistic form. There is no cure for it but in the recognition of what Revelation is, that it is light, and that that which is not light, is no portion of Revelation.

We have confined ourselves in the foregoing considerations on the Eucharist to its nature, and mode of its operation, to it as an exhibition of the mind of God towards sin, and towards ourselves, and how the benefit of that manifestation is ours by our spiritual apprehension of its meaning.

There are other aspects, however, in which the Eucharist may be regarded, but which our space forbids us to consider here, but to which we should like to draw attention at another time, and which we propose to do; particularly to its historical aspect, and the proof which that affords of the actual occurrence of the events to which it bears reference, and which may be considered apart, as they are apart, from any interpretation which has been put upon them as their meaning—for no doubt a story and its foundation are different.

Christ is the Revelation of God, the making of Him known by a manifestation in our body, a manifestation of that which is the Life or Spirit of God. The offering of

Himself on the cross was the acme of that manifestation. As the Incarnation is light, so the cross is the light of the Incarnation—the light of its light, its centre, its fulness. The Holy Eucharist is the reflection of that light, the mirror by which it is repeated; and as in the breaking of the body and pouring out of the blood on the cross, God is most fully revealed to us, and He may best be known, so is it with its Eucharistical reflection. As we enter into the light there shed abroad, we meet God face to face. And ah! the glory of that countenance! Ah! that it should be that which it is—the face of "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." The saint of tradition wiped that face with her veil; and she of Scripture washed his feet with her tears.

That which the Incarnation was, the Eucharist is. It is Manifestation, Revelation, light. If it is not this, it is nothing. If we do not see Christ in the "breaking of bread," He has been with us in vain. The cross is the height of Revelation; it is the centre of the light, that which gives light and substance to all around. The Eucharist is the reflection of this. If this be not light, if it be not light where the light should be strongest, if it be dark where it should be light, dark at that centre whence the light should emanate, how great is that darkness!

The foregoing considerations on the Eucharist were written before the publication of the second edition of Dr. M'Leod Campbell's work on "The Bread of Life," which

embodies much of the thought contained in the above, and to which the reader is confidently referred for a wider and deeper knowledge of this subject. The following passage from Dr. Campbell's pen has been in the possession of the writer for some years, and was addressed to him in connection with one of the controversies on the subject of the Eucharist which then exercised the Church, but which has been added here, as of interest and value at all times:—

"In proportion as we realize how truly Christ was known as their life by the early Christians—how living their consciousness of feeding upon Christ was, we come to see how that ordinance in which this secret of their life was set forth came more and more to be reverenced, and connected with that which it set forth, and which being partaken in, in the faith of that which it set forth, was found thereby to strengthen that faith of which it was the pure and simple exercise. Men consciously feeding upon Christ in that exercise of faith in which partaking in the Eucharist was a portion, knew how their life was quickened by such participating; and *their own* reverence for an ordinance which they so found unto life was according to this. But while right participation in the ordinance was a cherishing and strengthening of the faith of which it was the expression, such participation contained in it, besides the acceptance of Christ as the head of life, an offering of that life to the Father in conscious worship, and a presenting anew of the offering already accepted—not in the way of mere recognition of, and mental reference to it, as the source of a confi-

dence in man towards God, but in the way of that continual living offering, which is implied in our participation in the life of Christ, and which enables us to present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God.

"For we are related to our High Priest, the Head of our worship, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but in the unity and power of an endless life. The one life or Sonship in the Head and in the members ever offers the same acceptable sacrifice which in its Divine perfection was offered when Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God; and our acceptance of which as our Salvation is only perfected in this presenting of it to God as life through Christ born in us, which in the Eucharistic offering pertains to the whole Christian life, but is specially present in what we call the Eucharist in the same sense in which in it we feed on Christ."

We subjoin also a very valuable train of thought communicated to the author on the same subject, at the same time, by the venerable Mr. Erskine, of Linlathen, author of the "Internal Evidences," &c., whose name has been so long familiar to those amongst us conversant with the more spiritual aspects of Revelation.

"God has revealed Himself to us in a man—in the Man Christ Jesus; so that as we know and understand a man, we might in a measure know and understand Him. In this manifestation He has shown us what He Himself is, and what He desires and purposes for us that we should be. And here is the wonder. That which He manifests

Himself to be is the very thing that He purposes we should be. Herein is the love which passeth knowledge. But does He mean that we should be gods? Not so—far be it: He purposes for us that we should know ourselves to be creatures utterly dependent on Him for our being, and for the continuation of our being; but made by Him capable of receiving His Spirit into us, that we may consciously be partakers of the Divine nature, and be fellow-workers with Him in working out salvation. This capacity of receiving God is that which distinguishes man from the lower animals, and which remains with him whether he uses it, or not. 'The light shineth in the darkness, though the darkness comprehendeth it not.' And the Spirit breatheth where He will, and man hears the voice, though he may not know whence it cometh, or whither it leadeth. In truth, it is not a mere congruous recipiency, a mere capacity of receiving the Spirit, it is the actual presence of Christ in man, which was declared as the Gospel, as the tidings of great joy and infinite hope. This is spoken of as 'the mystery hid from ages and generations, but now made known, as Christ in you the hope of glory.' This is the preaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles to the Colossians and the Ephesians. This is the bond uniting man to God, and man to all men. And by the continual realization of this great truth man is to grow in conformity to the Divine Will, that he may be filled with all the fulness of God. Surely when the Apostle prays for the converts 'that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith,'

he means the same thing as when the Saviour Himself says, 'He that eateth me, he shall live by me.' I should think myself trifling with the Word of God, if I interpreted the second of these expressions by the first, and not the first by the second. In both passages we have opened up to us the great purpose of God, that Christ should be the Head of the Christian Family, animating all the members with His own life; that thus they may be partakers with Him in His Glory: 'For no man hath ascended, or can ascend into Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in Heaven.' That is, none can ascend into Heaven except by being partakers in that life which descended from heaven. Can there be any doubt that this is the real Communion, and that all ordinances are but signs and symbols of it? And are not the ambassadors of Christ forgetting their highest mission, when they occupy the thoughts of men with the signs, instead of the great thing signified? We are feeding on the Body and Blood of Christ, when our souls are occupied with the manifestation which God has given us of Himself and His loving purpose towards us, in the life and death of the man Christ Jesus; when we are vividly apprehending that it is by dying with Him that we are to live with Him; and that He became a man, and lived and suffered and died, that we might be sharers with Him in His holiness and blessedness.

"He would have us holy as He is Holy. Not by any fiction of law, but really holy; yet not in virtue of any

holiness which we can call our own, but by the indwelling of God in us. So that in the most advanced stage of the Christian life, the greatest proficient will say, not from a sense of duty, not from any unnecessary humility, but in the soberness of absolute truth and experience, 'I am nothing in myself, and incapable by myself of doing any good thing.' I believe that this is the highest condition that a creature can possibly be in. And so I would venture to criticize the confession used in the Church of Geneva. 'Nous confessons que nous sommes des pauvres pêcheurs, nés dans la corruption, inclins au mal, incapables par nous-mêmes de faire du bien.' All the confession I believe to be most true, but I believe that the last clause is not the confession of a sinful state, but of the state which will continue to be man's state in his highest exaltation, and what is indeed connected with all his hopes of blessedness, because it is necessarily connected with his living by Christ in him."

"I do not undervalue the traditions of the Church, but I believe that as far as these traditions have living truth in them, they have, and must have, one tendency and signification. They must have the signification that they belong to Light; that they are expressions of Light; and if the are received simply as authority, calling for submission, instead of addressing the spiritual reason, calling for sympathy and consentient co-operation, they are turned aside from the purpose of Christ in giving them to us. 'The good ground" are they who understand the word as well as

receive it, marking that in them which distinguishes them from all the others.

"Considering, then, that Christianity really means the indwelling of God in man's spirit, we can easily understand how the Lord's Supper, as the outward sign of this indwelling, should have come to take so large a place in the thoughts of many, to the extent even of being identified with the great and blessed truth of which it is the symbol. The danger is, that it should become the substitute for it—as it has done in the Church of Rome.

"Let us not put the warning from us. Let us diligently seek the blessing itself, and thankfully receive the ordinance as a voice calling us to diligence in seeking it.

"Whilst, then, we need not wonder, considering its character, at the place which this ordinance has attained in all Christian Churches, yet it must be evident to the reader of the New Testament, that the place now given to it is greater than that which it had in the time of the Apostles. In the Acts of the Apostles it is spoken of simply as the "breaking of bread," and in most of the Epistles it is not even alluded to. I would especially refer to the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians, to the Epistles of St. Peter and St. John, in which we have such openings up of the life of God in man. I ought also to refer to the Creeds, which do not mention the Lord's Supper, thus showing that in the four first centuries that ordinance had not become what it too often now has, a substitution and equivalent for all else."

NOTE (PAGE 22).

We need scarcely say that the "for Christ's sake" of the Epistle to the Ephesians (iv. 32) has no warrant in the words, "ἐν Χριστῷ" of the original, and that it had its origin in this confused and erroneous notion of merit which some of the Reformers adopted to controvert the errors of the Church of Rome. If false translations lead to false theology, no doubt false theology leads to false translations. Yet few have had so large and mighty a superstructure of error built upon them as the little "ἐν Χριστῳ" of the original here, when changed into the "for Christ's sake" of our translation. If we would be exact in theology, however, the first thing no doubt to make sure of (and especially in a religion which claims to be a Revelation) is the accuracy of its record. To secure this we are at this moment greatly pressed in England. Because of the imperfection of our record, many of our formularies are at present allowed to be received, as it were, but conventionally; pending a revisal, that is, of the original record on which they rest. No doubt a revisal of this is a very difficult and dangerous undertaking, but it is equally difficult and dangerous (and we think more so) to leave it alone; for at present those

who know most are those who are least satisfied with our present position. And such knowledge is sure to spread, until all are shaken. We must take heed not to offend the weak, but we must not confound those who are strong neither; and we must remember that the thoughts of the strong, although it may be now few, ere long will become the thoughts of the weak, who will then make many. But above all, we are not to build on false foundations. And if Scripture be the Word of God, we may be sure that we lose just in so far as we fail of having it in its integrity. Traditional errors may be covered by larger admixtures of truth, and be held but conventionally, yet a condition of things like this cannot be wholesome, and is in the long run sure to be destructive. It will repay us we believe to consider this question as it has been lately stated by two of the writers in *Macmillan's Magazine*, one in an article for the current year, on the edition of the New Testament, published by Baron Tauchnitz, which contains the variations of the three great Biblical Manuscripts, those of Sinai, Alexandria, and the Vatican; and one on the subject of the Athanasian Creed: they occur in the numbers for September and November, and deserve the attention of all who are called to be responsible office-bearers in the Church. The concluding paragraph of the latter is so solemn in its warning that we believe that we shall confer a benefit by transferring it to our pages. It occurs in No. 121, pp. 41, 42. "Our Church," says the writer, "has been called the most learned Church

in Christendom, a title of which her writers are never weary of boasting. But surely the lamp of learning must be burning with a flickering flame, when we find a passage which is not found in the two oldest manuscripts of St. Mark, and which, if not spurious, as it probably is, possesses the most doubtful claims to authenticity, spoken of by a distinguished prelate in Convocation 'as the statement of our Lord Himself,' and by a well-known ecclesiastical dignitary in the columns of the leading Church newspaper, 'as our Lord's own anathema,' without, so far as we are aware, these misleading statements being called in question, either in Convocation or in the columns of the *Guardian*. We can hardly suppose that all the prelates present in Convocation were ignorant of the critical difficulties which attach to the latter verses of St. Mark's Gospel; and if not ignorant of them, we think that at least one of their number might have had the courage to state them. What should we think of an historical or philological society in which a spurious or doubtful passage from some ancient author was quoted as decisive, and was allowed by the other members to pass unquestioned? And in proportion to the gravity of the subject, and the importance of the occasion, is, we conceive, the strength of the obligation to courage and truthfulness. A high tone of morality is the least that can be expected in the chief ministers of an established religion; but the simple love of truth is, we fear, a virtue which theological disputants have still to learn from those whose studies are of a more secular character. The reports

of Convocation are probably read by few persons who do not take a direct interest in ecclesiastical matters; and it is well perhaps for the reputation of Convocation that it is so. But perhaps we are fighting a forlorn hope. It may be that the English, like the Romish bishops and clergy, have determined to throw themselves on the ignorance of the uneducated and half-educated masses, and to make no effort to ally the Church with the growing intelligence of the times. Symptoms of such a determination are not wanting, and meanwhile the necessity for an opposite policy is becoming daily more urgent. Any careful observer of the tendencies of modern society may verify for himself the fact that it is the highest intellect of the nation which is most entirely alienated from the services and doctrines of the Church —that it is the stronger and not the weaker brethren whom it is now the most needful to gain. Will our ecclesiastical rulers recognise this fact, and attempt to provide in the Church of England a religion which, while it satisfies the deepest cravings of the spiritual nature, shall not be inconsistent with the most profound knowledge of the age? Or will they, taking their stand on the exact determinations of some past synod or council, repudiate all the discoveries of history, criticism, and science, and declare themselves at open war with intellect and learning? If they select the latter alternative, the end cannot be far off. It is indeed the primary duty of the parish priest to 'preach the gospel to the poor,' but the ecclesiastical ruler must take a wider view of the needs of mankind and the prospects of religion.

A Church or religion which no longer commands the allegiance of the higher intelligence of a nation, must sooner or later (though the time may be counted by decades and not by years) cease to retain its hold on the faith of the poor and ignorant. Those of our bishops and clergy who are anxious to avert so great a calamity would be wise at once to address themselves to the task. And however difficult it may be in many cases to reconcile reverence for the past with the more extended knowledge and searching logic of the present day, the course to be adopted in the case we are now considering is plain and unmistakable." And again, in a note to the above,—"The need of such elementary information on the criticism of the sacred text is painfully apparent from the manner in which our clergy, not excluding our bishops, constantly quote, both in their sermons and in theological controversy, spurious or doubtful passages as 'words of our Lord Himself,' 'utterances of the inspired penman,' and the like. Those who profess a peculiar reverence for the very words of Scripture, might at least be expected to employ the utmost pains to ascertain what those words are, and on what authority they rest." The writer of the above has, we think, scarcely done justice to the individual exertions which have been made towards remedying the evil of which he complains, or to some distinguished persons who have been prominent in the direction in which he points, such as Alford, Lightfoot, and others; but his words are words of warning and advice which ought not to be ignored or rejected, and they are, we

believe, the words of a friend. But at any rate the subject deserves the gravest thought; and not only individual but collective action, we think, should take place on the part of the members of the Church to give attention to them.

THE END.

PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., CITY ROAD, LONDON.

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY

THE RULE OF FAITH

THE RULE OF FAITH.

THE question of our day is not the same as that put to the Reformers—"Are we individually free to judge the meaning of Revelation?" but, "Are we free to judge what is Revelation or not?" An apparently different question, but in reality one and the same, for the answer to the one is the answer to the other—namely, that the power by which we discern the meaning, and which we must use if we would be benefited by Revelation, is a power which, whether we are conscious of it or not, is sitting in judgment within us on that which claims to be Revelation, and is accepting or rejecting it constantly as we go along. We recognise one portion of Revelation to be of higher value than another; we supersede the lower by the higher (Scripture contains within itself this recognition); and, when need arises, we correct the versions of the Record of Revelation by means of those who are qualified in language to do so—translating, altering, omitting, as the discovery of earlier versions, and the imperfections of those which we have, require.

The faculty by which we do this is called by various

names,—the power of discernment, private judgment, the critical faculty, inner consciousness, and conscience,—and is a compound of that intellectual and moral nature which we possess in virtue of our creation in the Divine Image, and by the development of which it is that we rise from lower to higher levels, or, in Scripture language, from one degree of glory to another—from the condition of the beast which perishes to that of one little lower than the angels. Its possession is the distinctive feature of humanity, and is one of the main factors of its immortality; it is that which raises us above the condition of the lower animals, and is the cause and explanation of a Revelation having been vouchsafed to us. It is a faculty which we cannot abdicate without resigning all that constitutes our highest dignity, rejecting our distinctive nature and the means which thus is given us for the attainment of a heavenly kingdom. It is the ground of that spoken of in man, by St. Paul, as "Christ in you the hope of glory."

It is to this within us that Revelation is addressed; it is by this that Revelation is discerned and judged. It is not meant that by this power we are able to identify all that claims to be Revelation, but that by this power we are able to recognise its light, and by this to go on to that which before was darkness. By it we are able to recognise such portions of Revelation as have in them of the nature of self-evidencing light, and by these we can go on to the illumination of others, if others there be which are without light in that which purports to be a Revelation.

It is because of our having this faculty that Revelation has been vouchsafed; it is on the ground of it that it claims recognition and acceptance. It is the ground on which our Lord Himself stood. When addressing the Jews, He said, "If I speak the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" It was because of this capacity of judging that the Jews had guilt in rejecting Jesus. It is the ground on which all must stand who either convey or accept Revelation, namely, that they are able to receive it, and able to receive because able to understand it, and able to discriminate it from other things, and to judge of its superiority to them, and also to judge of the superiority of one part to another. On this ground the Christian religion takes its stand in competition with all other religions; it commends itself by its superiority to them, and presumes that we are able to judge of that superiority. It is on this ground that, in comparison with other religions, those are to be condemned who reject it.

No doubt the absence of such a capacity of judgment would deliver man from guilt, by rendering him incapable of sinning, as the beasts are free from liability; but then this exemption would be more than balanced by the loss of that moral and spiritual nature which gives us the capacity for higher standing, and without which man would be reduced to a mechanical level; and the drawback of liability to guilt and the consequences of sinning are not more to be objected to than the pain which fire occasions, or any other suffering which has for its object to warn us from danger, and prevent death.

This faculty, as it is the means by which man is most

closely connected with the Most High, is that which proves him a son of God, in a higher sense than he otherwise would be: it is a faculty akin with the Divine Nature, partaking of which enables us to have "fellowship with God," and is the cause of our being called to it. It is a faculty common to man; its "sound has gone out into all lands, and its words unto the ends of the world."

There is no tribe among men which has not this faculty, there is no class which possesses it exclusively; it is not confined to a priesthood, or to one rite, or religion; it is not obtained by external initiation, it is not the privilege of some, it is not the property of an elect, save in so far as man as a whole is elect, as being made in a high image, but is the common and distinguishing privilege of man by which he can approach to God, and from the possession of which he is guilty when he does not do so, as St. Paul shows in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. It is that distinction of man's nature which, marking him off from the lower, links him to the higher intelligences—to all who with him are called to be partakers of the Divine nature. Its foundation lies in man's being able to judge, and to discriminate good from evil, and to approve of and cleave to that which is good.

By this within, man discerns that which is of a similar nature without himself. By that which he knows he discerns that which is not; by that which he knows he himself should be, he discerns that which others should be. By the laws of God he knows what God should be, that

which without doubt He is, Himself. By the laws of God he knows His will, in them he discerns Him and His voice. Man's ear within, when addressed by God without, is able to distinguish His voice; He has an understanding to know Him that is true, and when God speaks he hears. The Father speaketh, and the Son hears. By that which he ought to be, man knows what he ought to do; and by that which he ought to do, he knows what God does; by the highest within himself, he reaches up to the Most High. Knowing this, he can climb to, and rest on God. He climbs by a ladder, mounting as he goes, touching, tasting, handling, finding by that which is good. From that which ought to be, he knows that which is; passing through the outward appearances of things, he gets their real character. As he knows that which the Most High is by that which he himself should be, by this test and guide he passes on to all things. He gauges the visible by the invisible, he descends from the invisible to the visible, he judges the visible by the invisible; he gains the seen from the unseen, the temporal from the eternal. "The things which are seen," he knows, "are not made of things which do appear;" realizing the necessary nature of the unseen, he knows that the seen must be the same also, although the apparent is often other than it seems. Yet that its true nature, ruled by that which is unseen, is certain. And he knows that unseen is good. Thus he knows his path from beginning to end, and tries it as he goes along. He rules its accidents by its substance. It is an ascending path, it rises from the

physical to the intellectual, and from the intellectual to the moral: every portion an ascending step, every step an increasing proof of design and beneficence, an experience and proof that God is good. At first deeming his thoughts and hopes about God to be too good to be true, at last he finds them to be true because they are so good.

This, however, is a proof and problem which every man has to work out for himself, as Jacob wrestled with the Angel; it cannot be worked out by others for us, it is not ours unless worked out by ourselves; on its experimental working out by ourselves depends for us the benefit, as it was the intention, of Revelation. Another working it out will not give us the results; for another to have the results would not answer our purpose. In this "no man can deliver his brother, or give his soul a ransom for him." In this every man must be alone: if he would have the treasure, he must dig for it; if he would have its enjoyment, he must have it himself.

Without this experience, man neither has no adequate proof of the authenticity of the Divine message. Every other proof is external, and may be unreal: at the best it is outside, and so long as it remains there, it is not ours. Others believing is not our belief, others seeing is not our sight, others having is not our possession. If we but believe in God because others believe, if we but see by the sight of others, if we have but by the having of others, we neither believe nor see, nor truly have ourselves at all.

The fact of Revelation being sent to mankind at large,

is proof that all men are capable of apprehending and receiving it, and that it is necessary for them so to do. We must deal with Revelation as if it were so. The Father speaks, His sons must hear His voice, and we are all His offspring. "Have we not one Father?" says the prophet. Are not all made in the image of God? All in some sense assuredly. Where the Divine portion begins and ends in man, where humanity begins and ends, where man rises up from the lower animal, or returns to it again—who shall say? But in all there is some portion of the Divine image, if all men are in His likeness. All, therefore, have some portion in the Divine sonship, all power to hear the Father's voice, all sufficient to warrant the mission of a Revelation to them. In man lies a power to know, to discriminate, and to judge it therefore; and, accordingly, in man himself must reside the test and interpretation of Revelation.

Revelation, therefore, takes its stand on its own internal evidence and excellence, capable of being discerned by our own spiritual discernment. The voice without echoes in the ear within. It trieth its words as the tongue trieth meat. The Law without is recognised by the Law within. Having for its object to draw man to God, man must have something of God whereby to recognise Him. Revelation does this by making God known—a method which infers that man has a capacity for knowing Him. Having for its object to give us "fellowship" with God, we have capacity for this "fellowship." That which is common must be possessed by both parties, and of that which is possessed in common

each has part. The communication of a Revelation has for its object to increase that part, to enlarge the portion we have by giving us more. Thanks to His Love, coming into connection with the Most High we cannot but grow, and increase in stature. Revelation does this, or is to help to do it. Not by reversing what we know, but by confirming and enlarging it. It is a thing of progress and degree. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself: first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear" (St. Mark iv. 28). St. Paul, an Apostle, describes himself, near his end, as one "who had not attained nor was already perfect, but he followed after." He infers a process and a progress.

Revelation speaks of this increase as following the laws of natural life; that as by physical food and muscular exercise we nourish and develop the body, so it is done with the spiritual life. This is the condition in which we are, and to which Revelation comes. It supposes us to require a supply for our spiritual wants. It provides the supply. We are to take it in by the natural way, and assimilate it through spiritual apprehension and digestion: the spiritual food is to be dealt with as the natural. Its functions and operation are to be alike. We are to deal with the outward Revelation until its inward meaning is wrought out; we are to rise from lower to higher degrees of spiritual knowledge. It is the result which is important, but without labour there is no result. No substitute can stand in our place. We must work out internal evidence by inward exertion. All short of this is illusory. Outward authority no doubt is

important—nay, as introductory, is necessary, but it cannot be more than introductory. If rested on as more, it becomes a substitute. This is done when we take creeds and confessions of faith for that which they indicate, and to which they do but lead. Thus the guide is taken for that to which he should but guide. And sometimes a false humility is the cause of this—a pseudo-meekness which, however, is the counterfeit of true humility—a pseudo-meekness, and not true sonship, which, when we are called to the place of sons, knows it should not desire that of a servant. And nothing less than a true sonship is meant when Revelation calls us to "fellowship with God," and when we know the truth of the call by obeying it and experiencing its results. And no proof of the truth of Revelation short of this is much to the purpose. "If any man will do My will, he shall know of My doctrine." It is the original basis of evidence. By the attainment of a higher life—not by the formation of an opinion, but by the attainment of the higher life it gives in working out its behests—we know that this Revelation was of God, and that we have read it aright. This does not affect God, but it affects ourselves. The necessary character of God must ever remain the same whether we realize its meaning or not by Revelation. But the proof of Revelation being true from the character of its operation is the highest form of proof, and is not liable to the accidents which affect other or external evidence. Such proof cannot be felt, of course, by others; but it is open to them to have it, by undergoing the same process. What then is

the position of external authority? Its relation to Revelation ever is but that of minister. It indicates where the treasure lies; but it is not the treasure. It can be detached from it; and when it is detached, it has no intrinsic value; while that from which it was detached remains as before. In the last resort it derives its authority from that to which it ministers. For the ultimate sanction of external authority is found in the internal evidence on which it rests its sanction by intellectual and moral tests.

And in regard to Revelation, it is evident that although, in the second instance, instrumentality conveys Revelation, in the first instance Revelation gave birth to instrumentality. The Revelation of spiritual truths gave birth to a ministry, to rites, to observances; not the reverse. The Christian Ministry, Baptism, the Supper of the Lord, are the creation of Revelation, not Revelation of them. External evidence, or instrumentality, may be possessed without the treasure being itself possessed—without, that is, those who have it having any real experience of that which it indicates or means. It is inferior to that to which it ministers; that existed before it; it does not make that, which, until it operates, before was not. Instrumentality does not exist to make that which is to be, but to declare that which is. Christ blessed the little children because they were little children, not because they were Jews. It is in the truth that the power resides, in knowing and feeling that which the truth means. The name of Christ casts out devils; but it does this by the knowledge of what it means and is, not

in any other way. Realizing this, our evil spirits flee, and bad dispositions shrink in the realization of that which is, and is meant by the manifestation of God in Christ.

But let us now turn to that in which Revelation is contained, and how it is that we discriminate that which is Revelation. All that is needful or is known of Revelation we believe to be contained in Holy Scripture. We take Holy Scripture as the sufficient record of Revelation. The Sixth Article says, that it contains "All things necessary for salvation," and no doubt, so it does. But does it not contain more? The Church has shown that this is their belief when they reduce it to short Creeds or Summaries, or paraphrase it in Articles or Confessions. And apart from Holy Scripture many Jews and early Christians (to whom the greater part of the sacred writings were unknown) we cannot doubt were saved. The definition of the amount of Revelation needful for salvation is made, by Scripture itself, very limited. From the Philippian jailer all that was required was "to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

How much of Revelation is needful for salvation, and what is sufficient to constitute a rule of faith, must be solved by the answers to such questions as, "What portions are essential, and how do we know them?" &c. The record of Revelation which we now have in Holy Scripture was sanctioned as a whole by early Councils. It is accepted in this form to the present day. Additions no doubt have been made, as by the Church of Rome, of some apocryphal books, and other books have been dropped which were

originally sanctioned, and some are mentioned in the early ages which have never since been seen; but, generally speaking, the canon is now accepted as it was ruled by the early Councils. But the question now is raised, Are all portions of this genuine, and if not, how are we to distinguish those which are not? We cannot ignore the question. And practically we deal with it day by day. Every revisal and alteration of the text of Scripture (and many such there have been, and many more must be) deals with it. This at least recognises a power capable of dealing with the question. It is taken for granted that there is such power, and that it is internal. To what extent then do we possess this power, and who possesses it? It is granted that we have the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels. To what extent are they earthen? and who is to discriminate? There is no general answer; there is no outward test. The power is generally possessed, but it must be exercised by the individual. Its spirit enables the reader to judge of its origin; its spirit enables the soul with which it comes in contact to recognise the voice which speaks—to discriminate the voice, and to judge the true voice from the false. "We have an unction from the Holy One" (it is written), "and know all things." This is no description of an elect, but of those to whom Revelation comes. As the spirit of a man knows the things of a man; so, by the Spirit of God within him, and because of his birth in the Divine image, man knows the things of God. The question then arises, Have all this Spirit? We have said already that, in kind, it is the

same as that faculty by which we discern intellectual and moral truth. It is higher in degree, but the same as this in kind. It comes to us upon the ground of our possessing this power. We are told to search the Scriptures, to prove all things, to compare spiritual things with spiritual. Even the prophets had to search what the Spirit speaking in them did mean. There is difficulty therefore, but the power to discriminate is in us. "Ye are able," says an Apostle, "to know the things freely given to you of God." This power of recognition differs in degree both with individuals, and with the same individual at different stages of his progress. It grows with use, and with the cultivation of the spiritual and moral faculty to which, as it is addressed, so in a measure it depends; as it has for its object also the exaltation of this faculty. And no doubt from the variation in the state of individuals and of the individual at different times there will arise different degrees of judgment, and different interpretations will be given. Yet, on the whole, in this way no great variations occur, at least none so great as from the rule of an external interpretation. But were it otherwise, still the rule is sound, and there can be no other. For other rules must ever remain external, and give no experience of the truth.

But here we must advert to two opposite views of the mode by which Revelation comes, and what its Record is. One view, which is that taken by the Church of Rome, presumes that what we call Holy Scripture is but the voice of the Church uttering itself at a specified time, in kind

the same, however, as at all other times. The other, which includes that of most Protestant bodies, that Holy Scripture is different in kind from other utterances, and is the work of gifted men specially commissioned to deliver it. The first view infers that Revelation is still with the specific utterance of the Church, and that the true meaning of Scripture is only to be found in her interpretation; the second, that Revelation has been given once for all, is contained in Scripture, and that its meaning is found within ourselves.

Without going into these fundamental differences it may be sufficient here to say, that, looking on the facts recorded in Scripture as that which is the foundation of Revelation, and that they can now neither be added to, nor diminished, and they are all that constitutes Revelation, properly so called, —for the foundation and its history are different,—for all practical purposes the Record of Holy Scripture sufficiently sets forth Revelation. How are we then to interpret it? How much of it do we require? Holy Scripture, we have remarked, contains all things necessary for salvation, but also more, and more than is needed by the generality of men; not only because the generality never have had it, and never can, in its entirety, and because the vast majority are incapable of reading a written Record. But in the nature of things we see that less than the whole is sufficient. How then shall we discriminate that which is sufficient? and how are all to learn this? Critical knowledge to authenticate texts can be possessed by few. But a wayfaring man, though a fool, is to be capable of apprehending Revelation.

In essentials, then, it must be limited and plain. Summaries exist, such as in the beginning were supposed to contain all that is essential. What, then, is the value of the remainder? Speaking generally, no portion of the canon ought to be abandoned, and we should take the whole to the light of the Spirit, whereby it was doubtless written. Shining by its own light, the essential light will be seen by us; and that which is not of the light will be invisible. It is light; it must manifest itself by its light. It will do so to every one according to his capacity, and that capacity will increase as he uses it. It appeals to us by that which is proper to itself; it gives us the means for discerning its own value. It teaches us the value of the parts by giving us as a test the light of the whole. This must be our Light. And when we approach it from without and see that, on the whole, it utters itself so much in unison with itself, and that from such various quarters, by such various mouths, at such different epochs, its Divine origin comes to us with a warrant beyond the warrant which arises from the response within. Shining in the midst of so much gross darkness, as it did where and when it came forth, it cannot have had its origin from the darkness; it condemns the darkness, and is itself condemned by it; it is apart from, and, as opposite, so above it. Its nature shows its origin. It is light, and of the origin of light. Yet here, of course, we grant that it is not all of one character. The Record is not all equally light; there is that in it which is darkness, or contradicts the light. Does that which contradicts the light, that which opposes

our moral or intellectual faculties, come from above? That it is not all of one value we grant. Nay, that it has in it portions of very different value. But to come to a true conclusion here as to this nature or value, we must keep in mind the history of Revelation and man's earthly nature. Man is ever related to time and circumstance. He can receive, to begin with, no final rule, no declaration of abstract truth. This is to be his end, but it is not his beginning, and throughout the world man is ever in different stages of progress. Revelation, therefore, must have regard to those stages. It must be in proportion to the conditions to which it comes. To one age and person it will be different in degree from that which it is to another. Revelation must suit itself to the conditions of things, and teach men "as they are able to bear it." At one time, therefore, it gives "laws which" it says itself "are not good," that is, relatively, or as compared with those of a higher time or place; it supersedes, at fit times, the first or lower laws, which were given, it says, because of the "hardness of heart," for higher laws, when the creature can rise to higher. It gives true guidance from lower to higher regions; and the light is in accordance with the height we are in, and increases as its subjects progress in height, and it is the cause of the progress. There are portions adapted for various degrees of need and advancement. It is perfect, but perfect for a purpose; apart from their relation and purpose, the parts in places are not of intrinsic value. As in nature we are taught, and learn by time and degree; so it is with Revelation: we

take time to learn that the sun does not go round the earth: we take time to learn the real bearings of spiritual matters. Revelation contains an alphabet we have to put together to spell the words, and the words to learn the things, and we learn that the parts are less than the whole, and taken alone are different: but the parts make up a whole which together is one, and from this whole we must learn the value of the parts, and not from the parts the whole. Here and there, there are key-notes struck to keep up the unison,—key-notes from beginning to end. Once we have these, as the bee selects its flowers, so the soul and the discriminating power in man select the higher from the lower blossoms of Revelation. And they who do so know that it is honey when they find it: know it from that which is not, and that which is not from it.

But to many so varying a rule will prompt the demand for something more fixed and stable. A desire will be felt that the rule should be fixed and invariable. It seems a reasonable demand. For no doubt Revelation is an objective thing, and works its subjective ends by that which it presents without. It, therefore, should be absolutely defined and accurately presented. Some sufficient and ready means must exist, it will be said, for the determination of that which is truly Revelation, and that which is not. Is there no such means? An affirmative answer is given which many think sufficient. Let us look at it therefore. But to us, the only sufficient proof of the Divine origin of, and guide to that which is, Revelation is by the apprehension

of its contents, and in the experience of their working within ourselves. For we must always bear in mind that God is a personal God, and must be personal to every man, to be his God at all—to be found, that is, and recognised by the man himself; that He cannot be found or got for us by another; and that until He is found and got by ourselves He is not ours, in a true or beneficial sense at all. God must be found by the man himself: he may be, and perhaps in the first instance must be, directed to Him, but he has not found or got God until he has found and got Him for himself. The God of another is not my God; He is not my God by authority, I must be the authority myself. Man does not really worship the God of another man. He must be his own God, consciously his, ere he can worship Him; and until He is this, He is absent from, and not the God of my mind and heart. He is outside of me; at the most He is the God of another, of him who shows Him, but He is not mine. Again, God is not God by signs, or majorities, or by oracles, &c., but by being that which He is. "I am that I am;" in other words, I am, by what I am. God is ours when we find out that which He is, by that which He is; we have not found out before. Until He is thus apprehended, He is to us as if He were not. Our thus recognising Him does not indeed make Him that he is, but to us it is as if it were so; it is that to which St. Paul alludes when he says he travails with his people "until Christ is formed in them." And this power we have, and must exercise, and until its ends

are obtained we are practically without a God. Our sonship to God no doubt is a fact; we are "all God's offspring," but yet this is as if it were not; it is but latent until made operative by our realizing it. To call this sonship out of abeyance Revelation was given; it is external, but when realized it becomes internal, and is then authenticated by its own might.

But an external rule is demanded for this authentication, and, as we have said, is supposed to be provided. It is a natural demand, and to some extent can be complied with. Let us examine to what extent. What is the outward authentication for Revelation? The general answer to this, no doubt, is the Church. And by some the existence of such a witness is thought necessary for the authentication—and so necessary that the Church must be infallibly formed, and be herself infallible. The dogma of the infallibility of the Church is built on the supposition, that without her aid Revelation cannot be authenticated. No doubt such Church exists, and is infallible, and authenticates as well as conveys Revelation—the true and infallible but invisible Church. But this is not that which is meant. What is meant is an outward and external Church which shall authenticate as well as convey Revelation. A Church infallibly to be recognised, and whose judgments shall be infallible when recognised—does such a Church exist? If so, where do we find its history? The history of the Church visible and invisible is first conveyed to us in Holy Scripture; in it we have the earliest and original account of

any Church. The Church is there described as "the pillar and ground of the truth." Its birth and presence are there announced, its outcoming in possession of supernatural powers with demonstration by signs and wonders, with prodigies by which it reversed for the time the ordinary operations of nature. The Church was then identified by these, and the knowledge and possession of Revelation. We shall not return to the question here, how far the possession of supernatural power is the criterion of the possession of spiritual truth, as we have already somewhat treated of the question, and decided against its so being. But yet as testing the authenticity of the Church herself, we must give it some consideration, for it is the same question. If the Church is dependent on the possession of spiritual truth, it is evident that that which is not a test of it in the one case cannot be in the other; that, as regards the authenticity of the Church, when her integrity depends on her being in possession of the truth, no test which is not one of spiritual truth can be a test of that which is dependent on it. No physical miracle, it will be granted, can make any alteration in the truth of mathematical propositions, and the question as to all spiritual truth is the same. But here it will be said, if the Church introduces us to something which by nature we cannot have, are we not at once introduced to the supernatural? Is it not, therefore, natural that by signs and wonders we should identify the supernatural? Are not the credentials of an ambassador that which gives authenticity to his message? No doubt, when the author of the cre-

dentials is known. But physical signs and wonders lie outside the region of spiritual truth, and cannot confirm as they give no knowledge of their origin or author. Revelation itself warns us against this; it informs us that we cannot tell from such signs what is the origin they indicate, and to recognise by supernatural means is only another way of saying, we are deprived of the means of knowing. Supernatural signs or marvels are in another world from spiritual truth, and can neither confirm nor annul it. Spiritual facts have a region of their own; they cannot be touched by that which is not in the same region. The connection of spiritual facts with physical marvels may be introductory, it cannot be more. Accordingly, we find in the first ages of the Church that the possessors of such powers laid little stress upon them. Nay, they warn us against the possessors of such powers, as capable of using them in a wrong direction. They warn us against false miracles; they bid us not believe angelic witness, merely on the ground of their angelic office—finally, they warn us against false Christs on the supposition that we know, apart from supernatural sign, the nature of the true. The power of working wonders proves no more than the power of the worker to do such things. If by them the Church is identified as an outward body, it would not carry the proof that that she taught was true. But in truth, the real identity of the Church itself cannot be assured by such means, for the objections which apply to doctrine apply to it as the witness of doctrine, as we have said. But

Churches themselves have ceased to appeal to such testimony, or to rest their case upon it. By what means, then, can we identify the Church? We have said that the true Church is dependent on true doctrine. If the demand be made for a Church which is dependent on this, we reason in a circle. The demand is for a Church infallibly formed, which shall decide infallibly. It must be visible to be recognised. Is there no such?

Let us inquire. In looking for an external Church, we are met at the threshold by the fact of there being many claimants of the title, and with the difficulty of identifying which is the Church in the midst of so many claimants. The divisions of the external Church give rise to great difficulty in the identification of any with the exclusive title. We must not blind ourselves to the facts of the case, nor attempt to rule things as we should wish them. The Church is divided,—so divided, that it is difficult to identify the various portions as Churches. We must not shut our eyes to the fact that none of them can be called *the* Church. The true followers of Christ, those who have their souls most firmly anchored in His truth, can afford, and will be ready, to look this matter in the face.

The divisions of the external Church are astonishing. At this moment a condition approaching to chaos is its truest description. We should be but trifling with the truth, or wilfully blind, did we not observe and declare this to be the present state of things. We may wish it were otherwise, but we must not shrink from, and we cannot

alter, the facts of the case. The Church has been in the same condition before. Ere the meeting of every General Council something of the kind has ever been the case, but it was never more divided than now. The calling of General Councils is ever an evidence of a distracted state of the Church. We have such a Council sitting. The present Pope has called a Council because of the state of the Church, or to construct an instrument by which the identification of the Church shall be secured, and by which her infallible voice shall be heard. The gathering of the present Council has for its object to declare where the Church is, and what is its voice; those who feel that the truth of Revelation depends upon the testimony of such external voice must have sympathy with the Pope's act—they must feel that it is all-important to have such a voice, and the voice known. They will not say that it is needed, perhaps, for the creation of truth, but that it is needed for its identification. And hence the present exertions of the Pope and the Church of Rome. It is felt that in the divided state of the Church identification is needed; that with identification the consequence follows that the voice is infallible. It is so, if such an external confirmation to spiritual truths is needed. At this moment, then, a great portion of the Christian body is gathered together on this search, in obedience to the Papal call. It will probably be answered thus. It will probably be declared that the Roman Church has always been so original, so great, and integral a portion of the Church, that it is impossible to say that that is

Christendom of which she is no portion, and that that she says is not the truth; that, on the contrary, as the greatest, and even an integral and original portion of Christendom, she is the Church, and that the mouthpiece of the Church is the Pope.

Let us look at this Council, and see what it truly is; the object is important, the times are critical. The present Pope has called an Œcumenical Council; it is for the discovery of what is Revelation; of spiritual light. He will not accept this as its definition. But is it not so? and is not his call on his principles excusable? It is no mere call to unity; it is to find and make known the truth, to construct an instrument which shall declare the truth, and necessarily declare it, in all time to come—a light which shall be the light of the world. It is to confirm old and give out new truths, to construct an instrument which shall infallibly do this. The Pope has declared new truths before; they wanted confirmation. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was new, as not being received before by all; it is to be confirmed by a sufficient seal being put on its authority. This seal is to be that of the Church's or Papal Infallibility. To create this authority is the object of the Council. An infallible pilot it wanted. It is night. The night is dark, there is no "open vision," the track is unseen, the sailors now meet, declare the captain to be infallible, and retire, if need be, to sleep. Does this description seem grotesque? Alas! is it not true? The project is the revelation of a great need; a sign of

weakness, of the failing strength of that great body which requires such extraneous help to bolster its once so great authority. Darkness lit by such a torch will do little to illumine the profound; the construction of artificial means will but produce children in its own likeness. Saul seeks enchantments; wizards meet to create a brazen head, a calculating machine. There is no difference in principle here, than the methods of the Buddhists for discovering truth. We read of the election of the Dalai Lama, the pontifical sovereign of Thibet, as follows; it is the result of the election of 1841 reported to the Emperor:—"Your servant, Ming Pa, inserting his hand within the urn upon the altar, reverently proceeded to draw forth one of the slips. The inscription upon the slip was as follows—'The son of Tse-wang-ting-tchu, Thibstan; present age, four years.' All the attendant Lamas exclaimed unanimously with unfeigned delight, that the lot having now fallen upon this child, it is placed beyond a doubt that the genuine re-embodiment of the Dalai Lamas has appeared in the world, and the Yellow Church has a ruler for its governance. The minds of the people are gladdened and at rest." But the object of the assemblage at Rome, when we think of the objects it has in view, and the interests at stake, is more pathetic than grotesque. The axe is blunt—more strength is to be put to it; that is the proposed remedy for want of success in spiritual light and guidance. We do not say this in irony—far from it. Were this a meeting of humble Christians, or the heads of Christ's Church (if it has heads),

seeking after truth, our deepest sympathy and our highest reverence would go with them. But this it is not. It is the pathetic spectacle of men seeking to make certain their own preconceived opinions by decrees of their own, to change God's way into their ways, and to turn the flood into a particular channel, by ruling God's acts to be in unison with their own. It is a meeting to make personal that which is universal, which if it does not belong to all, cannot belong to any; an attempt to create that which exists already or does not exist at all, and which, if it do not exist, assuredly cannot be thus created. This construction of an artificial father and prophet is most pathetic. It shows the dreadful want which is felt of a father and prophet, the non-recognition there is of that which we have already of the eternally good and true, which are ever present, and must ever be so. It is a demand for something which shall be good and true, not from that which it is in itself, but from being made so from without. It is a scheme to create a Pope, not who shall be that which he is, sanctified by the truth, but being what he is, shall make that true which sanctifies, who shall sanctify the truth by that. This is a Pope indeed, a sad and grotesque spectacle, but more sad than grotesque. For when we remember what he has, in times past, said, the darkness deepens. Every utterance, even in our day, has departed further and further from the first revelation of things, and from those common things which experience tells us to be most precious; and, alas! many utterances have been death-

warrants written in blood and tears. One thing still remains to consider in it, and perhaps the strangest of all, that this oracle demands its own creation! Beyond this, pathos and the grotesque together cannot go. Assuredly, "there is no open vision" where such demands are made.

Yet so strongly is the necessity felt for an external corroboration and an united external testimony to the truth of that which has been revealed, that others who do not deem the Papal method, or the present attempt of the Papal Church, proper or sufficient, exert themselves to procure it in other ancient ways, and a favourite proposal is an union of the more divisions of Christendom, by which it is supposed that all that is required will be effected. We would not undervalue this conception, both because it contains that principle and factor of truth which union implies, and because of the high character and motives of those engaged in furthering such an union; and were an united testimony of the sort possible, nothing, perhaps, in the way of external witness, could be more to the purpose. But such union, we fear, is not possible; and if it were, must we not come to the conclusion that if it be necessary, all this time we have been without sufficient testimony, and, on the principle of those engaged in this search, the Church herself has been to seek?—that is, from the time of her great and fundamental divisions until this union be accomplished, we have been without any sufficient witness, and with a Church, at the best, but of a provisional character. But were such an union attainable, would it be to the purpose? It

could not add to the facts of Revelation, and it is on these Revelation must depend. It is these which give birth to the Church, and of these there is no question; that is to say, no such question as an union of Churches could help, or solve. We must remember, as we have before said, that the Church is the witness to, not the author of, Revelation. She does not create, she but bears testimony to that which was before her; she is the creature, not the creator of Revelation. The facts of Revelation on which she is founded in point of time are anterior to her. She bears witness to what they were; she is their record. She may interpret the record, but more she cannot do. She cannot touch the facts of Revelation. She cannot add to them, she cannot take away from them. They are external to her; they were her own factor. She depends on them, not they on her. They constituted her, not she them. Were all the records of equal value,—were all Scriptural utterances equally held Divine, still this would make no difference. It is not she which gives value to them, but they to her. She is but their guardian; they do not derive their value from her. She is their custodier, as the Jews were of the earlier records. The records were not valuable because they were kept by Jews, but they were Jews because the keepers of the sacred oracles. So it is with the Church. When the real and the official are present together, we must distinguish the one from the other, and give to the real the highest place, for it is the cause or foundation of the other. The one is the factor of the other; the first of the second, not the second

of the first. The real is the factor of the official, not the official of the real. In the second instance, the operation may indeed be reversed, but in the first it is as we have said, and the first is the test. And the real we know by that which it is in itself; the second by that which the real is. It was his faith which was the cause of Abraham's position. His official character as father of the faithful followed on this; it did not create it. And thus, when the Church but announces facts, she is but herself related to them as being created by them, and their historian. They are her foundation. She is the "pillar and ground of the truth," but she is not the truth itself. The Church is a herald, standing by that which she announces.

And when it is conveyed she is *functa officio;* that is, if the message be not taken in by the learner, as we say, by rote (that is, conventionally, not really), if the message be truly learned, then afterwards it will stand by itself; so that, if it has been learned, she cannot afterwards undo it; for it will stand by its own strength, and prove itself. If it was true, and she attempts to overthrow it, she will be overthrown herself; it is in the nature of things six times six is thirty-six—her testimony cannot make it thirty-seven, or make us believe that it is. An angel from heaven is not to induce us to receive anything contrary to that which has come to us before with the force of truth. An outward authority cannot undo the nature of things; it cannot make or unmake it; it can only bear testimony, and the strength of its own standing will be just in proportion to the amount of the truth that is uttered.

The early ages had great difficulty as to the Record of Revelation, or, as we call it, the Canon of Scripture, as all conversant with their history know; and while it is plain that the Councils, so far as they were composed of true Christian men, did the best that they could, it is equally clear that they were at a loss what to do. At first they rejected some books which they afterwards approved; and approved of some they afterwards rejected. The Council of Laodicea, for example, in the year 364, excluded books which the Council of Carthage received thirty-five years after. Jerome complains that in his time the transcribers wrote, not that which they found, but that which they understood (Hier. Epist. 28, ad Lucir. p. 247); and Epiphanius complained (as do others) that the Gospels of Luke and Mark had been altered (Epiph. in Anachor. tom. 3 oper.). The controversy as to the Hebrew writings, from the use and non-use of "the points" in writing, the superior or less authority of the Septuagint, the certainty of some books being lost, as those of Enoch, Nathan, and the third Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians—all these things show the difficulty which attends the value of outward testimony on this head, and the wisdom of the conclusion of St. Augustine as to the Canon in general (Epist. 19, and Hier. tom. ii. fo. 14): "If I meet with anything in these writings that seems repugnant to truth, I shall not doubt to say that either the volume is faulty or erroneous, that the expounder had not reached what was said, or that I have in no wise understood it;" leaving, in short, the criterion of

value to the internal evidence or its intrinsic value, and relegating the outward to a dependent place. Are we then without an external test? A sufficient testimony may be got from the general agreement of Churches, or rather by the observation of that which is as to the facts of Revelation, and, more than this, we do not of necessity require, because such testimony can be but introductory. Holy Scripture, as a whole, and the three greater creeds, contain a history of all the facts which constitute what we term Revelation. Beyond this we do not value the special testimony of any Church, as such, either as to the facts of Revelation or the integrity of the Canon of Scripture. And for good reasons.

The Roman Catholic Church, for example, which probably alone is as large a portion of Christendom as all the rest of Christendom put together, has ruled in later times as a Church, that certain apocryphal records are equally canonical with those which were always received as such from the time when the Canon was formally authorized by the then whole Church; and that a faulty translation (the Vulgate) is of equal authenticity with the original Scriptures. It was in the power of that Church, no doubt, to rule that the Apocrypha was canonical, however wrong or mistaken she may have been; but it was not in her power, as she did, to rule that it had been always so,—that is, that it had been always part of the Canon,—for this is notoriously untrue, and its untruth was known to herself. In no part of the Church of Rome's proceedings is the little value of outward authority more clearly apparent than in this treatment of Holy Scrip-

ture, and in those disciplinary regulations which keep it a sealed book, and in the parity of rank assigned by that Church to tradition with it. On this head we quote the present Bishop of St. David's, probably the greatest modern authority on such subjects. At page 88 of his late charge he says :—

"I observed that in matters of doctrine the head of the Roman Church is not a free agent. Nothing depends on his individual will and pleasure. He cannot make the smallest concession. He cannot reopen the discussion of a question which has been determined by the vote of the majority in a General Council. That is the fatal unhappiness of his position. But there is, on the other side, a counter-impossibility with regard to matters of fact. In such questions nothing depends upon the will. Men cannot change their convictions in these matters, unless constrained by the force of evidence, and it must be remembered that facts of history and of grammar are susceptible of as complete certainty as facts of astronomy or arithmetic. No effort of Galileo's will could have enabled him to disbelieve the motion of the earth. The power of the Inquisition might have prevented him from learning the truth; it did force him to deny it; but it could not alter his inward conviction of the fact. As little could the authority of a Council, though composed not merely, as at Trent, of two or three score, but of a thousand bishops, enable a scholar to accept that which he knows to be a mistranslation as a true rendering. Yet this is what is required of him, when he is called upon to recognise the Vulgate as authentic

Scripture. Still less can it do that which exceeds the power of Omnipotence itself; abolish an historical fact, undo the past, make it not to have been. Yet this is what was attempted by the Council of Trent, when it decreed the canonicity of the Apocrypha, not merely inserting them for the first time in the Canon—which would only have been a scandalous abuse—but declaring that they had always formed part of it, which was notoriously untrue. When men not ignorant of history are invited to believe this as a fact of the past, they too must plead, *non possumus*. It is in vain for them that a Council stakes its infallibility on a proposition which they know to be false, with as full assurance as they have of their own existence. A thousand echoes cannot change falsehood into truth. When two such impossibilities come into conflict with one another, compromise and conciliation may well seem hopeless. There is, however, this difference between the two cases: the one impossibility is a fact in the divinely-ordered constitution of the human mind; the other has no basis in the real nature of things, and is indeed nothing more than an arbitrary inference from most doubtful premises, grasped with a tenacity proportioned to its intrinsic weakness. This last is indeed the only part of the case which seems to me to open a door for a single ray of rational hope." But this is that which the Church of Rome has done as to the Record of Revelation: it is to enable it to do the same with greater show of authority that the dogma of Infallibility is at present sought for the Pope.

Such a formal and scandalous act goes far to destroy the value of external testimony to the authenticity of the Record of Revelation; for this was done by one of the largest portions of the Church. And the value of the evidence of other portions of Christendom in this respect cannot be of much intrinsic importance, if we consider that the Churches of the East, for example, have gone far to overturn the value of their testimony as to the original Revelation, by the addition of rules and practices which virtually set aside their recognition of its paramount value. And, indeed, many of the Western Churches have gone far, by the addition of Confessions of Faith and private regulations, to do the same.

The addition of special definitions by particular Churches has greatly tended to destroy the value of the original record, and most Churches have gone beyond their legitimate powers in this direction. For, as we have said, the Church is called to be a faithful and true witness, but nothing more. If this is all that she can be as a whole, she cannot be more—nay, not so much as this, when broken into parts. Yet many severed parts have set up their own private definitions. Definitions of the faith delivered by the Church as a whole would be valuable, but they cannot now be obtained; although obtainable, definitions by portions of the Church can be but of limited value. The Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and of Rome, we say, have erred. We cannot claim exemption for the Church of England, or consider her decisions infallible. This being

so, she has wisely, as we think, in many recent cases abstained from making new definitions. Particular Churches may enact bye-laws, but they cannot with propriety legislate on matters common to the Church at large. Holy Scripture contains all they have any right to venture on; and no Church, we conceive, has any right to lay down authoritatively her interpretation of it. As the Church at large has never laid down any authoritative interpretation of it, it cannot be incumbent on any particular portion so to do. We cannot suppose such a power necessary, or it would have been given, and defined from the beginning. The Holy Spirit is promised to us individually to lead us into all truth; beyond this there is no promise of infallible guidance.

And additions to Holy Scripture have ever failed to secure those very points which it might have been thought they would secure, the unity and uniformity of believers. The additions made to the Apostles' Creed by the Nicene Council went far to cause the division of the Eastern and Western Churches; the Creed of Athanasius severs the Western from the Eastern Churches; the additions of Trent have circumscribed Latin Christianity; and the Confessions of Augsburg, Geneva, France, Scotland, and America, have done more to sever us from each other, and destroy the Church's unity as a whole, than they have effected for unity even among their own adherents.

We are even, in short, finally brought to consider the Record of Revelation in Holy Scripture itself on its own

merits and by its own light; it is therein we have to search for the true authentication and value of Revelation. The question now is raised, How far are these Records and Revelation authentic? How do we know that they are, or what of them is authentic?

Whatever value we give to tradition as a witness to Scripture, it is evident that its real value depends upon, and must be tested by, that which we find within itself; that its nature and value cannot be ruled or overruled by external authority, but must be tested by that which it is within itself, and have its sanction from its own force. We recognise, in fact, already that this is the case, as one common instance will suffice to show. There are many versions of Scripture, for example, of various degrees of excellence. We proceed to sit and judge of that which is the more excellent without scruple; we judge them ourselves by their own internal evidence, and we choose one and refuse another—that is, those who are sufficiently learned in the languages so to do.

Is it then a question of scholarship or analysis? No doubt to some extent it is. We do not say that the apprehension of the meaning of Scripture is by this means, but to a great extent the accuracy of the text of Scripture must be by this means; and if the text, then to a great degree the extent of Scripture and of Revelation. And no doubt, so far as the text goes, it must be so. But then this does not go far; for experience shows that the various versions which we have are in so great a general agreement among themselves, that the original facts of Revelation remain all but

essentially the same, and so probably ever will remain, for the discovery of new versions of Scripture of much greater antiquity is highly improbable. We need not repeat here what we said at the outset of our judging and arranging Scriptures in different degrees of value within ourselves, by their higher or lower teaching.

The point then remaining is, Does our version contain all that is of the nature of Revelation, and is the whole of Scripture of this nature? Is it certain that Scripture contains all that can properly be termed Revelation? and is all of it required?

We cannot say that all parts of Scripture are of equal importance, and the difference of versions makes the claims to a verbal inspiration impossible; yet it is true to say that, in a general sense, it is needful to retain all we have, that we may be fully possessed of all that is of the nature of Revelation. And while we feel that the spirit of the Record is one, we are safe to say that by this spirit we shall be led into the recognition of all that is most important in it. In possession of this spirit we pass from part to part, and any portion not homogeneous is omitted by us—as the electric fluid runs through a building, striking out or passing over those portions which are non-conductors. But, as a rule, the unknown is interpreted by the known: a light shining in darkness is sooner or later seen by that which is light within ourselves. Conservative of all portions, those are most valued of which the use is known. But it will be felt that this leaves the question of the Rule of Faith too vague,

and that still beyond—granting, let it be said, the sufficiency of Scripture interpreted by the Spirit—the great fact remains, that all have not copies of the Holy Scriptures, and that, besides this, a large mass of mankind must ever exist which cannot benefit by them if they have them, not being able to read them. What, to such as they, is the Rule of Faith, and means of salvation? Is that promise of Christ Himself to His disciples in going away unfulfilled? or, if fulfilled, in what way is it? We do not believe it to be fulfilled by the giving of a Book—nor do we feel, in the divided state of the Church, that the Church, as the word is generally understood and has come to be, fulfils it. The Church on one side of an arm of the sea, or across a river even, teaches differently, and is known by different tests from that on the other. What then remains? Is there no Rule of Faith? no sure finding of Revelation? Have the gates of hell prevailed? or, if not, where is that which is wanted? The gates of hell have not prevailed, and that which we require exists, and can readily be found, but it must be sought in the spirit, not the letter—in that which it was the object of Revelation to give, rather than in the means which were taken to give it. The thing itself has come; and we must not confuse the altar with the gift, nor the shrine with the image, the treasure with the casket. Christ Himself has come, and is prevailing; and Christ was that to which the Church and Scripture both belong, and not He to them. He has taken means to secure the result Himself had in view; and if they are not precisely what we should have

expected, doubtless they have been and will be sufficient, although it may be the instrumentality and outward signs and proofs are not ever as they were, one and the same, or what we naturally should have expected. The gates of hell do not prevail. For the world is more distinctively Christian now than ever it was before, and that in a higher way, in higher places, in higher aspects. The most advanced nations of the world are Christian, and it is by their Christianity that they have been advanced. It is Christianity which has advanced them, and made them what they are. They are distinctively Christian. Do we not know what that means? All men know. And it is not a few leading or elevated persons in each that are Christian—not kings and rulers, who may call themselves by Christ's name "because of advantage," but the bulk of the leading nations have become Christian, and are ruling their rulers by the maxims of Christianity obliging them so to rule. Most men now, in a higher sense than before, are finding their true relations one to another. False notions of liberty, equality, fraternity, may be abroad, but they are rooted in truth, in the truths of Christianity, and it is from Christianity they had their origin. Christ has made men kings and priests,—all equally kings and priests,—and men are finding out what that means, and are seeking to be members one of another. The ultimate root of all these desires is to be found in Christianity; they came in with Christ; before the idea was unknown. But, on the contrary, it is now said that this is an infidel age, and no doubt there are

signs of infidelity. But let us look at them, and we shall find that many of them are signs of faith rather than of infidelity. Men are in search of that which is true, and are not at rest until they find it—find, that is, something sufficiently reasonable to warrant faith; for true faith is based on reason, not on the absence of it. The age is accused of that which is called "Positivism," and in a sense this is true. Men are not satisfied with that which has not a root in the regions of experience, until they find this. A religion which has no meaning to them, they discuss until they find the meaning; and if they find none, or that which is bad, they reject it: they do not, as once perhaps they did, sit in timid or indifferent acquiescence. And so many are in a more apparent and conscious attitude of unbelief than once it was the fashion to be. But this cannot be called an evil, for it is the highway to truth, which cannot be found without seeking, that is, in any beneficial sense. It is a better condition, no doubt, than that of men supposing themselves to believe when they do not, having never inquired. Men who were before indifferent wish now to know what Revelation is, what it means, what is its object; and all this is good. Search is abroad, and great inquiry is made as to the value and meaning of Revelation. All our newspapers even, and all our literature, are more or less full of the question; the leading events of our day testify to its presence and power, for all the leading acts and ideas of the time are in this connection. Thinking men do not now, as once they

may have done, recite creeds as if they were charms, or use rites as if they were amulets, or consider Christ as a means of escape from justice.

Conventional phrases are at discount. Artificial theology has fewer followers. That system of Christianity which was equivalent to the "Memtr" of Hindostan, or to the writing of a verse from the Koran in Arabia, and licking off the ink ere dry, and swallowing it as a remedy, and which was not without parallel among ourselves, is on the wane. We are speaking of the inquiring and more thoughtful, and of these we say there are more than there used to be. Some, no doubt, have not awoke to this, the higher life which is breaking, to the demand and necessity there is for a more active and reasonable character of belief. Many even yet, perhaps, look on inquiry in religion as evil, and the realization of meaning in it as quite unnecessary; who, resting on that which they have received, and believing in its efficacy without knowing what it is, are greatly disturbed at demands for investigation, and, at the shaking of that they had, think there is an end of all perfection. These still apply the theory of the "Memtr" to Revelation in Europe with as much earnestness as to the religion of Brahmah in Hindostan. It is with them—that is, it is an article of belief—that a form of words, so be it that it is communicated by one of the authorized, is highly efficacious; it has unlimited power over all things, both visible and invisible, extending even to compelling obedience from the gods themselves and from Fate (Frere's "Deccan Days"). Something like this, no doubt, is

supposed to reside in the words and rites and priesthood of Christianity by not a few. Even now, among ourselves, Christ's name is used too often as a charm by which to mitigate the wrath of the Most High, rather than as the Revelation of the way in which the Most High is best known.

The promise to Peter that the knowledge of God conveyed by this name should give eternal victory, has been turned into a mysterious power, called that of the keys, whereby an unknown region is opened and shut in an unknown way. God's "promises" and His "covenants" (so called) have been made to bind Him, as it were, irrespectively of His will: as if a wife were but kept to her husband by her ring, and God not safe to do that which is right always of Himself. That there is in all these things a shadow of truth is evident, but it is of truth, the true meaning of which has passed away, leaving but an indication where once it was, and may still be found, if revived. But with such it is still buried, and the key to the treasure lost. Solomon, we read, had a word (the name of God) engraved on his seal, which had such power that the genii were bound by it, and that its pronunciation shook the heaven and the earth. Now, what is this but the revelation of the same thing in ancient times as is now the cropping-up of a knowledge lost, of which the sign remains? for no doubt the story of Solomon's seal simply means that once God was truly known, and that, where truly known, evil spirits, heaven and earth, are theirs who know Him—or, in Christian words, that the knowledge of God overcomes the world. We have said that the meaning

of Revelation is to give this knowledge. That Revelation has been given, and is ours. The question still remains, Where is it to be found? Where is it in its integrity? and by what means is it to be tested? It must be found in something common to man; it must be found in something accessible to all; it must be easy to discern when found; it must commend itself, when found, by its inherent power; it must be recognised by its inherent excellence. All religions have been held and tried by their tests; and the lower, when put in competition, have ever given place to the higher. But Christ styles Himself "the Son of Man." The religion of the Jews was founded on that which is common to man. It has its counterparts in those portions which are true of all religions. All of these, so far as they are true, find a response one in another. But there is, no doubt, difference of degree; and the highest was, unquestionably, with the Jews. Yet there was to be one still more high—a Revelation still more Divine—a Revelation, however, which has its root in that which is common. Christ came; His distinctive utterance was in that which is common to man. Let us take as a test what we call the Lord's prayer, or the prayer of our Lord. Its root is in that which is common to man. Yet it had to be called out by Revelation; by the Revelation which is in Christ—by Christ Himself. And when we compare it, we find it, although with its root in man, yet in a degree so much higher as to give it a difference in kind—a difference in kind so great as to show Him who spake it to be different in kind. "Never man spake like this man,"

that is the degree of comparison; that is the proof of the higher nature; that is the test of what that nature is. Plato, Aristotle, the highest of those who spoke before outside of this region—we feel, after Christ, that it is impossible to go back to them, because it is a going back.

We have come then to that which is the test and the rule of Faith—something external; yet, if judged by ourselves, something common to man, accessible, easy to discern, which commends itself, when found, by its inherent power, and is recognisable by its inherent excellence. It is Christ Himself; Christ, the Messiah; Christ, the Desire of all Nations. Where then is He to be found? where is this easy access and assurance of true knowledge? *Domine quo vadis?* No doubt, the Church, taken generally, affords this knowledge; and the Record of Revelation in Holy Scripture plainly sets forth Christ—Christ so plainly that we must be assured of our knowledge. However Churches may differ, they cannot deny that the foundation of their existence, its cause and object, is to set forth Christ; however versions differ, and however much is contained beyond the general need, none can deny that the outline and nature of Christ are plainly seen, and that the main teaching of the Scripture is Christ. Christ is there set forth, and Christ is truly Revelation—its measure and meaning, human and Divine, Divine and human: Divine, to evoke and raise up the human; human, to recognise and respond to the Divine.

It is a difference in degree ending in a difference in kind;

beginning with a difference in kind to end with a difference but in degree. The degree of elevation shows that the voice with which Christ spake is more than man's, although capable of being responded to by man. Such a voice as His could not originate with man; it is a Divine voice. The Word took flesh and dwelt among us, revealing the thoughts of the Divine nature—God, whom no man hath seen or can see. This voice has gone through all the earth, and its words to the end of the world. The Church and Holy Scripture are its instrumentality, and its warrant is found within those who receive it. Thus the Rule of Faith comes to be the Life and Death of Jesus Christ—a Rule, no doubt, obscured, but yet sufficiently visible and audible. It has been obscured by the scaffoldings and wrappings which have been used to protect it; so much obscured, indeed, in many times and places, that the true Rule, our Lord Jesus Christ, has been as little known since His coming as America was before the days of Columbus.

But these Churches, although they have covered up the fair statue, must bring it forth. They must remember that it is their own warrant on demand, and that other foundation can no Church lay than Jesus Christ. Thank God, this is beginning to be recognised. Thank God, Christ is beginning to be shown. The conservative and well-meant wrappings, the destructive and ill-meant removals, are alike disappearing, and that fair form is being more and more revealed and brought out as the Rule of Faith.

All over the earth there are cries for and manifestations

of Christ. There are strange cries among them and strange pictures of Him (Strauss, Renan, "Ecce Homo"), tentative sketches, Chinese drawings; yet there is but one cry, What is Christ?—one name mentioned—one demand made. Is there not here an instinct of truth? Certainly Christ has been the object of all that we properly can call Revelation. In studying the history of the Jews in the Old Testament some such outcoming is their only adequate explanation. The coming of a Person was the interpretation they themselves put upon the tenor of their history. They supposed it to be the main object of their national existence. Their belief, at least, culminated in this conclusion at the time of Christ. This was their interpretation of their own history, and, no doubt, it was the recognition of this expectation being fulfilled in Christ which was the preponderating cause of His recognition by His first Jewish disciples. It is evident that to this they attributed that supernatural power which seemed present with Him, and by which He was testified to them to be, and was in the first instance received, as their Messiah; and it is equally evident, that belief in His bodily resurrection was the turning-point which confirmed them in their faith. It is true that afterwards they and others, and notably St. Paul, received Jesus on other and higher grounds than that of outward evidence, even although this included the resurrection of His body—even by the superhuman dignity of his moral and intellectual nature (as St. Paul afterwards evinces in his words, Philip. iii. 7—15), and for not recognising which as the true test, St. Thomas, after

the resurrection, was implicitly blamed by the Lord Himself: "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed." But at first the resurrection and other supernatural signs were the chief confirmation to them of His being the Messiah they expected; and assuredly no greater proof can be given of the reality of the belief of the disciples, at least in that resurrection, than the suddenness of the change in their conduct which took place after that period—a change from abject fear and desertion of Him, to unhesitating courage and confession of Him. And this not only to the risk of, but to the forfeiture of, their lives—a change which can only be attributed to a belief by them of His resurrection. And, indeed, His resurrection, as it was the cause, so it was the hinge on which the testimony of the Apostles turned; and to them Christ, in His life and death and resurrection, was evidently all in all.

Christ, or a personal advent of some kind which should do all that was required, was the expectation and outcoming of the Jewish hopes; it was also the expectation, at first, of the heathen who heard Him preached. That expected One came, and the world was regenerated by His coming. A Rule of Faith and practice had come sufficient for all, and all who heard it were satisfied with it. The face of the world was changed. It was changed by this. But by-and-by another change appeared, a change on the face of the world, a falling away. What was the cause of this? No doubt a falling away in the clearness with which the

rule was set forth: a system was set up as the rule, instead of the person of Christ; and a theology was constructed instead, as the sharpness and clearness of the original image were forgotten; and partly through the devising of safeguards for preservation, and partly from artificial explanations overpowering the simplicity of the original facts, Christ eventually was put out of sight, and a new faith and practice were substituted in His stead. Christianity became a business, a profession by which men earned a livelihood; and as the original was too simple, a complicated system, which required experts, gradually grew up into His place—a system of substitution began, and of official and relative holiness. A theology was founded, as to which, looking at the nature of the case and the express words of Scripture, it is difficult to understand how it could have been invented, were it not equally difficult to understand how, when invented, it should retain its place as it does unto this day. By it, however, it is enough to say that the foundation of faith, and the Rule of Faith and practice in Christ as the one Rule and foundation, has been essentially altered, so as in many places to leave little trace of that which was at first.

Let us look at the features of the new system which usurped the foundations of the old. One leading outline will suffice; one sufficient example will give its principles and character. The original terms of the Gospel ran, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." These words contain and set forth

that which we call the Gospel. They exactly describe, we may presume, the exact state of the case—the meaning, that is, of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. The meaning of Revelation, its object and cause—"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"—these are the terms. But in the theology which succeeded this first Gospel, a strange *bouleversement* has taken place, something which amounts indeed to a subversion of the Gospel, at least of its original terms. Instead of "God so loved the world that He gave His Son for it," it is changed to, God so loved His Son as to give the world for Him; and this change in the terms of the Gospel holds its ground in many countries to this day; nay, and amongst ourselves. It is a change much to be wondered at, and deplored. In the nature of things, as in the express words of Scripture, the case would stand, that God's compassion for the needy (arising from love for the needy, and a desire to help them) was the cause of the bestowal of help, *i.e.*, gave birth to the mission of His Son. This is the natural description of the way He took to reach a desired end. But in the theology of substitution the way is turned into the end, and the whole conception is reversed; and on this false basis is founded a construction of equal error, explanatory of the error, and only itself to be explained by it.

It was, and alas! is, a wonderful transformation, whereby darkness has been thrown into the midst of light, requiring darkness to explain itself, whereby, through upturning the foundation, the original superstructure has been dislocated.

This bringing in of darkness at the centre, by the reversal of the natural order, has been the main cause of all the subsequent errors and difficulties of the Church, of the expedients and creation of artificial and extraneous learning, and the creation of Rules of Faith, which were themselves in need of rule. Had the light been left to its own simplicity, and Christ Himself been left in His original form and place, as the means of God for the healing of the nations, by drawing them to God by Revelation of Him, all the subsequent darkness and difficulty would have been avoided—the infallibility of Churches, the supernatural aspects of Scripture, been unnecessary. As it was, all these things were conjured up as explanatory or conservative necessities for that which would have needed nothing if left in its natural order and alone. In the original order the character of God explained and commended itself by its character; here it had to be explained and commended by other things, and, after all, was left uncertain and obscure. The character of God, by this reversal of the natural order, became abnormal and unreal. His love for man as such, and for individuals, was lost sight of, and the soul left to a conventional relationship with Him, which left it entirely outside, and from whence it could draw no nourishment; while all desire on the part of the creature for that which was good and true in itself, and all prayer for its obtainment, were regarded as not being desired by God for their own sakes, but for some other and external reason—"fellowship with God," or God's fellowship with righteousness,

being excluded. Pressed to a conclusion, also, this conception either involved a dealing of one portion of the Deity with another, which, if they were one, was impossible, leaving the inference that the other dealt with was not one with God,—or leaving the one dealt with, that is Christ, in the place (if not God) of a creature, for whose sake, as such, it was impossible to believe so much was credited to the sake of others. But perhaps a root may be found which explains and reconciles this confusion and *bouleversement*, and in all probability it is this, that a misapprehension of the real force of the words, "He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one," lay unnoticed, and that their true meaning that God's intelligent and moral offspring—those who bear His own image—are so precious to Him, that He Himself became their Saviour as He was their Parent—that as the Father loveth the Son, so by the First-begotten He seeks and saves those who wander from Him. It is the manifestation of God in Christ, which is to be the Rule of our Faith and the object of our imitation. Nothing other and nothing less—the Divine character, as seen in Him, calling out in us the powers of which that call renders us capable, exhibiting to us, as in a glass, the Divine image to which we are to be conformed. Other rules may become obscure, they may become too much or too little, they may become confused. This is that which, in its simplicity set forth and seen, can be taken up, and by the Spirit reproduced, and in measure achieved by every man. This, no doubt, was the Divine object in giving it to us—and since it is given, nothing

else is permissible or enough. In Christ, God has made the nearest approach possible to man. Christ fully lived in that nature which we can only and but partially touch and reach; but Christ, as touching that nature in which we live, gives us a link and medium of union, and for progress to perfection; and other Rule for salvation or Name there is not. Other foundation can no man lay as the Rule of Faith or Practice. But have we not said that this also has become hard to find? No doubt it has been misconceived and altered. Confessions of Faith, ordinances, Churches, the very mother of Jesus, and the saints, have been put into His place, and shut out Christ; to what extent sometimes is incredible. In one Sicilian parish, a trustworthy informant tells us, the priest was bidden to ask Christ to speak for him to St. Antonio! Not much worse, however, than the conception among ourselves that the world is not precious to God, or only precious for Christ's sake. Is it then so difficult to find Him—to find this Rule of Faith and Practice? It is not difficult if the conception once gets hold that this is the true path, the one thing needful; not if it be at all realized that in Christ there is what we seek; and *this* we believe, is coming to be realized, and is now asked for, and doubtless, if asked for, it will be found, and one finding will insure more demand. Every Church must confess that He is the object of her ministry, however much she may have gone away from it. Every one will see, who looks, that He is the great object of Revelation: marred and imperfect as His form has generally been seen, dim as are the linea-

ments in most places set forth, yet still everywhere there is a glory round the head of Christ to make Him the Light of the world, and if we realize this, the light will seem to increase. Swallowed up by other things, put second to many,—many which have their light alone because of their communion with Him,—hid by definitions which "laying bare have sealed," Christ and the name of Jesus still command the love and reverence of mankind; and as the true nature of Christ dawns out more and more, other things will fall into their place. Confessions of Faith, rites, external worship of His mother, all things which are secondary, and have their place but from their connection with Him, will retire behind Him as He is seen as He is. They will then be seen to be but reflected lights. The chief thing to do is to put Christ first—to realize that He is the Rule; then all things will assume their true value. Alas, how little is the meaning of His name known! How many hymns, for example, are sung to Christ as the true Foundation by those who know not in what the foundation consists! How many contend for his Divinity who know not in what He is Divine, in what His Divinity consists, who recite words which convey no meaning to them. "Truly this was the Son of God!" "Never man spake," they say, "like this man." Do they all ask why? If they ask, they will probably themselves answer, "Because He is the Son of God." But will they ask in what the Sonship consists? Will they see that it is because of what He is, that He is the Son of God?—that the words are Divine, and stand by their own right as

such, touching, tasting, handling, teaching that which is Divine? We fear not. The words Most High signify to most men very little. Few know that which is Most High. Yet should we not all do so? is not some portion of it within ourselves? and do we not, by that, go on to that which is more—that within us responds to that without? Harps ring when in unison. When Christ is seen, our warrant for His Divinity is the response within—our finding Him to be that which we ought to be ourselves, but are not; yet knowing, know what is in God. Seeing this in Christ, we see that which He must be and is—that He is one in nature with the Most High, one fully, as having the Holy Spirit without measure. We know, indeed, what we ought to be but in part, but from that part we go on unto the whole, for it is portion of a whole which is one in kind, and of which, if we have a part, we can reach on to the others—*sic itur ad astra.* By the light within we reach the light without, the eye seeing the stars: there is a common nature in both. And by the light of Christ "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," as we see the glory, so we know the glory; and knowing, are changed into the same image by the Spirit which is in the glory. But Christ is not only the Rule of Faith, but of Hope. Christ is the realization of that we dimly feel after, but cannot otherwise find—of that which we imagine, but cannot see—of that perfection which we feel possible, but have not achieved—of that in God, which when we conceive to be too good to be true, when we see realized in Him, we know to be true because it is so good;

for when revealed in Christ, we see that this is necessarily the character of God. In the great intervals which separate the worlds of matter, in the time between the action and its cause, in the meanings hid from sight, we find in Christ that bridge which spans the gulf and fills the chasm; holy love brooding over, pervading, originating, and ending all things; Divine fears, struggles, death, and sorrow; a Divine life, a Divine death, which should have been, if been it had not, but having been, reveals and confirms that which we had imagined, but had not before found. Christ is the discovery of that planet which, sought for by rule, confirms the calculation by finding. Starting with the conception that God is Love, and searching the vacant heavens, we come upon the postulate of our calculations. O vacant heavens, uniform and without speck, how doubly beautiful do ye become when looking for that, we find it, the far-off star, which those who look not for cannot see, but which on those who have the Rule of Love dawns faintly from afar, faint and far, but real, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, the proof and confirmation of our calculations and our hopes! Christ is the rule and measure from which all guidance comes, and by which all performance is to be considered. He is the eternal Rule of Faith and Practice, the manifestation and gauge of that which God is Himself. What He was and is, what He did and said, if true at all, is ever true, was true from the beginning, the same before as when exhibited on the cross: seen once for all, when the Word became flesh and dwelt

among us, but the same before as then. The things seen in His life and death and resurrection were the turning-points of the world's history. If true *then*, they were true for ever; if *real* then, always abiding. And is it credible that they should not be true and real *then*, if they are but the exhibition of that which is true eternally, although not exhibited—the necessary character of God? Of all invention, this would be the most remarkable, the simulation of that which is eternally true. Christ came, and His coming has altered the face of the world. His disciples at first did not see His glory, nor in what it consisted; nor do we. They were aroused by His resurrection; up to that time they saw nothing, they forsook Him, and fled in abject terror. He arose from the dead, and they awoke to His real nature; they were as bold as they before were afraid to confess Him. Yet was this but a partial recognition; it was not that in which His true glory consisted. St. Thomas is rebuked for requiring this proof. Afterwards they recognised it in His moral grandeur. To that resurrection it was, that St. Paul, when more fully apprehending, sought to come. And so is it now. Christ has come and gone: the world saw not, scarce yet sees, His glory. The Church soon fell back to His second glory, rather than His first—to signs and wonders and quasi-magical rites—to outward Rules of Faith and Practice. But, thank God, better days are at hand; the signs of the second stage of the recognition of the higher glory appear, and they who see them are blessed by the vision and expectation. Thanks and praise! the greater

rule the less, and not the less the greater. Thanks and praise! that the less are included in the greater, and not the greater in the less; that that which is eternal rules the temporal, and gives life and meaning to it. Thanks and praise! that when we know the law by the law, we can find that which we seek, and rise from that which ought to be, to that which is, and no longer say, "O that Thou wouldst bow the heavens and come down!" but that resting on that which is, and reaching from this to that, we can get the character of that which is, and be at rest in Christ. No doubt there is a great silence; but the fact is not altered nor undone by subsequent want of sign. What the silence means is simply that which silence ever means when the seed is sown—that the crop is growing. The crop grows silently, it has no name, it may not know its name; many will call themselves by its name who are not of it; many are of it who are not called by its name; its manifestation is not here, its harvest is in another world. Once the Sower was seen, once in the end of the world—of the old world, that is—"once for all" was all that was needed, once for all the "perfect man and the just" was seen, and the Rule of Faith for man manifest in the flesh. We need not, we cannot, ask for more; that which we have to ask for is grace to profit by the lesson, and pardon for the dimness of our eyes and the long hardness of our hearts, when the Light shone in the darkness, and the darkness recognised it not—when the Light of the world was in the world—is in the world, and the world saw, and sees, it not—when He stands at the door

and knocks, and we look without, above, and beneath, for that which is within us—without and within us.

Domine quo vadis.

The subjoined pages are extracted, with the author's permission (the venerable Thomas Erskine, author of the "Brazen Serpent," &c.), from his work on "Election," now out of print. They also formed part of the editor's work on the "Internal Word"—but as that is not now to be obtained, it has been thought well to give them a place here, as a ready access to means, not otherwise, it is believed, so easily available, for direction to the true basis whereon the reception of truth, and especially of Revelation, must ultimately rest.

"Underlying every reasonable attempt to instruct man in spiritual things, and all reasonable appeal to his conscience, is the supposed fact that there is in man a real capacity of spiritual discernment—of actual response to the appeal. To prove that there *is* such a capacity in all men, and that the true end of all instruction from without is to call it forth, to cultivate and direct it aright, but *never* to be a substitute for it, and also to point out the relation which Holy Scripture, as an authoritative Revelation from God, bears to this innate capacity in man, is the object of the following treatise.

"No doctrine of election or of baptismal grace which limits this capacity to certain classes of men is consistent with truth of fact, and all such limitation does virtually

destroy the meaning and impugn the truthfulness alike of the appeals of sacred Scripture and the language we use in social intercourse, annulling, in short, and rendering meaningless the whole constitution of man, and giving the lie, not only to the deepest instincts of our being, but also to all our actual experience of ourselves and of others.

"One preliminary remark must be made to avoid misconception. It has become customary to apply the term 'Natural Religion' to those efforts which, in all ages, men have made to find out by themselves and for themselves the deep things of God—the mystery of His Being and of our own Being—the relation which the one bears to the other—what the true end of our Being is—and what are the true means for attaining that end.

"The word is never so used here: but by natural religion is meant a religion which has *a real root in our nature*, so that the doctrines of it are believed, not merely or chiefly on any outward authority whatever, nor on any process of reasoning, but on the authority of an inward consciousness, in the same way as we believe that there is a God, and that justice is right and injustice wrong, not on any outward authority, but through an inward consciousness.

"The term 'natural,' then, is not used in reference to the *source* from which the suggestion of a doctrine *first comes to us*, but to the authority which finally *seals it to us*—that is, which gives us the assurance that it comes from above, from the God who made us, because it is in harmony with the *nature* in which He has made us.

"The elements of this internal or natural religion are found in the consciousness, by whatever means it may have been awakened, that the voice within us, which enables us to receive and to judge—which approves righteousness and condemns unrighteousness—is the voice of a Being distinct from ourselves—above ourselves—the voice of our Creator, to whom we belong, who upholds us, and who has taken up this mysterious position within us, that He may direct us in the way of righteousness and bless us in communion with Himself. Thus *natural* is not opposed to *supernatural* religion, for it is assumed that all religion, in so far as it is true, must be supernatural, being the incomprehensible although conscious meeting of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God. Natural must not be opposed to supernatural, but to *conventional* religion; that is, to a religion adopted on external authority, without any living consciousness within our hearts corresponding to it.

"While we are not conscious of the nature of the voice which speaks within us, we may disregard, or pervert, or overlay it, so as to be even unconscious of its presence; nevertheless it *is* there, and it is given to all, to lead us on to perfection, and it is the only power which can do so. Whilst we do not recognise the voice in our conscience to be the voice of a great Being who in this way is coming near to us, and who desires to make Himself known to us, but are considering and treating it as part of ourselves, we may be acknowledging the truths of theological science, nay, even those of the Bible, and we

may be ordering our conduct according to the received maxims of the age or country in which we happen to live, but we have not a religion possessing any living root within us; our religion is conventional and not real, and therefore not in the true sense natural; we have not yet met God, therefore do not really know Him at all; and it is to know Him, to be acquainted with Him (not merely to know about Him), which is eternal life.

"The God whom our intellect conceives of is a power or principle, discerned by the intelligence, through a logical process; the God of the conscience is a personal being, discerned by the conscience as light is by the eye. Those whose knowledge of God comes through the intellect alone, may often dispute, as the Epicureans and others, whether there be such a thing as special Providence,—whether God cares about the condition of individual men, and seeks the direction of their character and conduct; whereas those who know God through their consciences begin with these very points as the groundwork and first principles of their religion,—as matters not of inference, but of consciousness.

"But some one may say, 'I have no consciousness that this voice within me is anything else than a part of my own nature. I am not conscious of its proceeding from a Being distinct and separate from myself, and surely you have no right to make your own consciousness an authority for others.' Certainly not; but there are many things which, whilst unattended to, are not matters of consciousness, yet become so by being attended to. Thus the action

of the heart or of the stomach is to many not a matter of consciousness; but if, by reading or otherwise, the attention is drawn to them, the action of these organs may become an object of consciousness. This could not be unless there were previously a dormant capacity of consciousness. Attention could not create such a capacity, it could only awaken it.

"Now, may there not be a similar dormant capacity with regard to many things in our moral and spiritual constitution which *may* be awakened; and, if so, is it not of the deepest importance that we be not hasty in disclaiming the capacity, and that we use every means within our power to awaken it both in ourselves and in others, instead of indolently and culpably trusting to any substitute for it?

"Inasmuch as it is an acknowledged fact that truth comes to us from without—that it is not the creation of our mind, but has a real objective reality, whether we receive it or not—we must receive it on outward authority at first. We do so receive the truths of natural science. We believe on the authority of our teacher, for instance, that the earth moves round the sun; but, believing this at first because he says it, we grow up into an actual apprehension of the grounds on which he says it, so that he is no longer our authority; our faith has become independent of him. And this, observe, is no disparagement to our teacher; in so far as he has any true love of the truth which he has communicated, he will rejoice in it; for he can now have a fellowship with us, and we with him, which, apart from this actual possession of a common truth, would have been impossible.

"Now the Bible declares that it is for this actual fellowship with Himself that God has made us; with nothing lower than this, therefore, can He be satisfied. But we must *grow up into* it; it cannot be conferred upon us. And the first step in this growth must be to receive the seed into our hearts, and to let it lie there till it springs.

"The consciousness, then, of an approving and condemning voice within the heart may long lie dormant, and yet afterwards prove its pre-existence by awakening under the influence of circumstances which call attention to it; and a farther degree of attention may enlarge that consciousness, until the man recognise the voice within to be the voice of a Being distinct from him, but seeking oneness with him. This expansion of consciousness from the acknowledgment of the voice to the acknowledgment of the speaker, marks the relation between morality and religion. It must, however, be observed, that what is here spoken of is an *expansion of consciousness*, not a mere intellectual inference that because there is a voice there must be a speaker. Such an intellectual inference may lead to the conscious recognition of the Speaker by calling attention to Him, but until it does so, it is only a part of theological science.

"Now let us suppose the case of an individual whose moral consciousness had never been awakened. Let us suppose that he is brought out from the evil circumstances which had deadened it, and placed under a teacher who inculcates on him the danger and folly of his former habits of fraud and selfishness, and the importance of averting from himself

future punishment, and securing reward, by a change of conduct, and that he believes his teacher's word, and, with the help of a good generalizing intellect, forms his notions and his judgments accordingly through a long list of particulars, being influenced therein solely and exclusively by the authority of the teacher, and not by any consciousness in his own heart of the excellency of truth and love, and of the evil of falsehood and selfishness: would such a change of creed or judgment as this, though accompanied by a change of conduct, be worthy of the name of a *moral change?*

"Is it not manifest that a man in such a condition of mind would have no sympathy with truth or righteousness in themselves, and could therefore only comprehend that certain forms of outward action, called by these names, were to be assumed in order to gain certain ends?

"But suppose we go farther, and say that the teacher, instead of founding his instructions on his own authority, shows his pupil a book, which he tells him is God's book for the instruction of the world, according to which God, who is Almighty, will reward or punish men, and that he founds his instructions on the authority of this book, and does so with precisely the same success as in the former case, that he succeeds in impressing on the man's mind a conviction, founded on the authority of this book of God, that certain acts will receive praise and reward, and that certain other acts will receive blame and punishment, but still, as before, without awakening in him the slightest per-

sonal consciousness of the intrinsic excellence of what is right, and the intrinsic evil of what is wrong: would the substitution of the authority of God's book for the authority of the human teacher make any real difference in the true state of the case? or shall we say that there is some virtue or efficacy in his mere submission to the authority of this book, which compensates for his want of all recognition of a supreme moral authority within his own heart, and all love of goodness for its own sake? No one who understands this question can answer it in the affirmative.

"Now, what are the conclusions to be drawn from this? Are they not, *first*, that the moral life consists in an inward conscious knowledge of the difference between right and wrong, and a conscious choosing of that which is right; and, *secondly*, that the true purpose of the authority of the teacher, or of the book, is to awaken, and nourish, and purify, and strengthen that consciousness,—that they are useful when they do awaken it, and that they are perverted from their use when they stand in its place?

"No one will question the soundness of this principle when applied to mere morality. Does it not apply with equal soundness to religion? Can we suppose that there is a living type within man corresponding to every outward rule or form of truth in morals, and that there is not a similar living type within him corresponding to every outward rule or form of truth in religion? Can we suppose that God has delivered us from the necessity of trusting to any outward authority for our knowledge of right or wrong in the com-

mon steps of life, and that He has left us to lean upon outward authority for our knowledge of Himself, and of His relation to us, and of His ways towards us? Surely not; it is as impossible to believe that we are cast by God altogether on an outward authority for our religion, as it is to recognise *that* as true religion which rests entirely on outward authority. Do we not all feel that we are responsible for judging of what is presented to us under the name of religious truth, in the same way that we are responsible for judging of moral truth? Do we not, in fact, feel that morals and religion do not belong to two departments of our being, but to one; and that the same kind of light which is given as our guide in the former, must be our guide in the latter? If a man who had been brought up and educated in the knowledge of righteousness, but without instruction in any special form of religion, had the Bible and the Koran put together into his hands to choose between them, do we not feel that he *ought* to prefer the Bible, and that there would be a moral culpability attached to his preferring the Koran, because we are conscious that the Bible agrees with that witness of God which is written in the heart more than the Koran does? If this be not admitted, can there be either a right or a wrong in our choice of religion at all?

"The difference between morals and true religion, therefore, is rather a difference in degree than in kind, although the difference in degree may be so great as to make them appear different in kind. A man is living simply in a moral state when he recognises the *light* within him as a righteous

direction of his conduct and of his judgments of things; he is living in a religious state when he recognises it in his conscience to be the presence of a personal infinite Being, the true living personification of righteousness, who made all things, and by whom all things consist, and who has come thus into him, not merely to give him directions how to act, but to make him a partaker in His own righteous nature, that he may be also a partaker in His purposes, and finally in His blessedness,—and when he, in the light of righteousness, consents to these purposes.

"I believe that we may arrive at the conviction that there is a God by other ways, and through other channels; but I do not believe that we can ever become *acquainted* with the true God in any other way than through the light of righteousness shining in the conscience. Our feeling of weakness, and of incapacity to satisfy ourselves, and our tendency to look above ourselves, and to seek for the origin and explanation of all things in the supernatural and the infinite, assure us that there is a God; but they do not make us acquainted with Him; they do not bring us into contact with the Life.

"'The *Life* was the *light* of men.' And we cannot know truly that Life or living God, except through and in that light. It is only by a patient waiting on the light that we shall find the Life. But we are prone to make haste, and to be satisfied with the light as a mere direction, instead of waiting on till it manifests itself as Life. And we are, perhaps, still more prone to be satisfied with those conceptions

of God which our fear or our wonder, or our faculty of tracing effects to their causes, suggests, instead of waiting for the discovery of His real presence with us as the Righteous One in our consciences.

"Is it not manifest that all false religions, all mere intellectual theologies, all superstitions and poetical mythologies, arise out of these wrong ways of seeking God? And is it not also manifest that all religions so formed necessarily tend to pervert the conscience and darken the light in it? Do they not subject it to another law than that of a discerned and felt righteousness, which is the only authority to which it ought to bow? For surely there is no *righteousness* in yielding obedience to any authority, except so far as we discern it to be a *righteous* authority. Indeed, obedience to mere power, without discerning righteousness in it, can only be the effect of selfish hope or fear, and must therefore be necessarily opposed to all that is true both in morals and in religion.

"Whenever, therefore, the authority of God is separated from a conscious judgment and choice of righteousness within our own hearts, we have got out of the proper limits of true religion. True religion consists in the conscious perception of the union of these two things, or rather in the discernment of them as one. It does not consist in taking the one for granted because of the other, but in seeing both really as one.

"We are thus led to the same conclusions with regard to religion as with regard to morality. And as we have seen

that morality does not consist in adopting the opinions of any man or any book, however well authenticated, or even however well ascertained to be divinely commissioned, but in the awakening of that inward consciousness which perceives the distinction between right and wrong, and chooses the right; so also we see that true religion in a man's heart cannot consist in any mere submission to authority, however believed to be, or even ascertained to be, the authority of God, but only in the awakening of an inward consciousness, which discovers the Life in the light, the Righteous One in the righteous command, and which chooses to do His will, not merely because He is the Sovereign, but because He is the Righteous One, and because it loves the righteousness of His will.

"And thus, however true the form of religion which we profess may be, and however sincere and zealous our profession of it may be, it is not, in us, a true religion whilst we hold it merely on the authority of Scripture, and not on an inward authority; that is, whilst we do not ourselves discern its truth and righteousness, and whilst we do not, in its truth and righteousness, meet with the True and Righteous One within our own hearts.

"It may assist our conception of what true religion consists in, if (as we did in our examination of the moral principle) we bring it also into comparison with other changes which might take place in a man, differing from it in principle, and yet somewhat similar in appearance and language. Let us then take the case of a man much alive to the impor-

tance of possessing the favour and avoiding the displeasure of God as the most powerful Being in the universe, and let us suppose that to him is granted the privilege of having continually with him an inspired person whom he may consult at all times, and who makes it his business, distinctly and definitely, to tell him at every step of his progress through life what the will of God is, thus enabling him to do everything by a special guidance, and in perfect confidence that what he does is well-pleasing to God; and let us farther suppose that he actually makes use of his gifted guide, and follows his counsel at every step, but that he does so simply because he believes that it will please God, without the slightest sympathy with or enjoyment of the righteous character of God manifested in that counsel.

"Now, what shall we say of this man's religion? At the first glance, we might be tempted to think that the man who was so placed was highly favoured in a religious point of view, and that he possessed, in the guardianship of his inspired companion, a greater gift than we, as a race, possess in the gift of conscience. But when we consider that the desire of God with regard to us is, that we should ourselves possess the mind of Christ, and that we should know His will and be fellow-workers with Him in it, because of the conscious approval and choice of our hearts, we cannot but see that the condition which we have supposed is not only opposed to true religion, but is far below the high calling wherewith the meanest of the children of men is called, and that the man who walks by such a guidance, instead of

being really taught of God, is in fact only relieved, as it were, from the necessity of seeking the true teaching of God, the object of which is, not to point out particular steps, but to lead man into sympathy with the purposes of God, and to enable him to apprehend righteousness and eternal life in all the will of God.

"Let us now vary the instance a little, and let us take the case of the inspired person himself—who has an oracle within himself, distinctly and definitely indicating to him what things he ought to do, and what he ought to avoid, so that the business of every hour of the day is fixed for him by a supernatural direction, communicated to him in the way of an inward impression; and let us also suppose that he, in the assurance that this oracle is really of God, obeys it, but still in such a way as that his obedience flows not from any discerned righteousness in the things ordered, or sympathy with their righteousness, but, as in the former instance, from mere submission to the authority of God: would the change of the locality of the oracle from being outside of him to being within make any real difference in the case, so that his obedience to it could now be considered as true religion; or would it not leave him in precisely the same state as before, namely, trained in submission, but untrained in righteousness, and in real participation in the mind of God? In truth, such an oracle, although it appears to be an inward authority, is as much outside of the man as if it were lodged in another person, for he is not one with it.

"The conscience, which God has given to every man, is a much higher gift than either an outward or an inward oracle such as we have been supposing. It is a capacity of entering into the reasons of God's actions and commandments; it is a capacity of a true spiritual union with Him;* and thus when we meet the will of God in our consciences, we receive it in the way of participation, or as an infusion, so to speak; whereas when we meet it in an oracle simply, we receive it as an impulsion. That which does not enter by the conscience, but is merely put upon us, or imposed on us, can never really affect our nature; it may elevate us as instruments in the hands of God, but it cannot elevate us into fellowship with Him. And therefore the smallest conscious and sympathetic conformity to the will of God is a much higher thing than the being made the instrument of any great work, such as raising the dead or declaring things to come.† In the one case the man's nature is really elevated; in the other, the man is only used for an elevated purpose.

"The Gospel of Jesus Christ is admirably suited to the nature of conscience, for it teaches us principles, and deals little with particular or definite directions. It contains centres and not circumferences; it sows seeds without defining the exact form of the tree; and thus it does not

* And yet the voice of God in the conscience *may* be obeyed, as I have supposed in the case of the oracle; it may be obeyed in a slavish spirit, from a regard to consequences, and not from sympathy of choice; but this is a state out of which our Lord proposes to raise us. "I have not called you servants, but I have called you friends." (See St. John xv. 15.)

† See Matt. x. 11.

relieve us from the continued necessity of consciously entering into the mind of God, but only enables us to do so.

"I am sure that there are many, who in the uncertainty and perplexity of their minds as to the steps which they ought to take, have often wished for such an oracle, either inward or outward, as I have described, not considering that by such a wish they are really seeking to escape from the true teaching of God, who would have them learn 'of themselves to judge' between good and evil.* I believe that this very wish to escape at once from uncertainty by a definite direction, instead of seeking to rise out of it by a patient waiting for the light in our consciences, has been the parent of Popery, and of all similar religious errors.

"When a person submits his conscience to the spiritual guidance of his priest, he relieves himself from the personal obligation of apprehending truth in the light of his own conscience, and substitutes implicit obedience to authorized rule in its place.

"The Protestant often does the same thing with regard to the doctrines of religion that the Papist does as to his whole religion. He relieves himself from the personal obligation of apprehending truth in the light of his own conscience. He casts himself on the Bible as the Papist does on the Church, and adopts whatever doctrines he supposes to be there, without feeling that he must actually *discern* their truth before he can be really entitled to call himself a believer of them. He thus substitutes outward authority

* Luke xii. 57.

for that light which is life, although he condemns the Papist for doing the very same thing.

"There is a very interesting story, in some part of Raynal's 'History of the East and West Indies,' if I remember right, which I have often reflected on in connection with this subject. The purport of the story is, that two missionaries, one a Christian, the other a Mahometan, arrived about the same time at an island of the Indian Ocean, and propounded their respective doctrines to the natives, who received them both with great respect and attention. After they had taken their departure, the king called the people together, and said to them, that as neither he nor they were capable of deciding which of these two religions was the true one, he wished them to join with him in desiring from God that He would deliver them from their perplexity, by so ordering circumstances, that the first ship which reached the island should be to them a sign indicating that the religion of the people to whom it belonged was the true religion. He accordingly, along with his people, made this prayer; and soon after a Mahometan vessel arrived, on which the whole island became Mahometan, in obedience, as they thought, to the will of God, expressed by this sign.

"I can scarcely believe that the story is true; but supposing it to be true, it deserves to be considered whether the way which these people took of getting rid of their difficulty was right or not. To me it appears that it was decidedly a wrong way, being nothing less than a culpable renunciation

of their standing as spiritual beings. They had that within them by which they were able, and therefore were bound, to have tried and compared the two religions; and they had no right to evade this duty. God had set the duty before them, as an opportunity of receiving a blessing through it. But the great blessing which is derived from a true religion comes through appreciating and receiving the righteousness of God revealed in it; and therefore they, in refusing to try it by their consciences, did, in fact, put from them the blessing intended. And God answered this conduct by sending the Mahometan vessel first, as if to teach us who hear of it, that Mahometanism and Christianity are of equal value to those who judge of moral truth by outward authority.

"I cannot help associating in my own mind this little story with that very beautiful one in Herodotus, of a nation which had received under their hospitality, and pledged their faith to, a prince who had been driven from his dominions by Crœsus, then in the midst of his conquests. Whilst Crœsus with his army was at a distance from them they maintained their fidelity to their guest, but when he approached their boundaries, and threatened them with the weight of his vengeance if they did not deliver up his enemy, they began to hesitate, and sought counsel of an oracle whether they should give him up or not. We feel at once that they had committed a great crime by asking counsel from any outward authority, in a case which they themselves ought to have determined by consulting the oracle within their own consciences, and that they deserved, as the punish-

ment of their offence, the permission which they received to break their oaths and surrender their guest. We hesitate, perhaps, about allowing ourselves to look on our Indian islanders as in circumstances at all similar. There is, however, a resemblance (in principle) between the two cases, although the degrees of culpability are certainly very different. And if my reader perceives none, there is reason to fear that he does not see any satisfying reason why any one religion should be preferred to another.

"'The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ who was crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.' The Jews were continually asking a sign, that they might be delivered from the necessity of judging doctrines by the light of God in their consciences. And the learned Greeks, in like manner, desired to escape from conscience, and to be allowed to rest their religion on the authority of an intellectual demonstration. But the Apostle who preached redemption from sin and death, through a dying to the flesh, consented to in filial dependence on the fatherly love of God, declared at the same time that his doctrine could have no other effectual witness or proper basis but the light of God in the conscience—the true witness of the Spirit.* The instruction indeed may and does come from *without*, both in morals and in religion, but that authority which seals it is *within*—

* 2 Cor. iv. 2.

that inward spiritual consciousness which constitutes the *life* in religion as well as in morality.

"This is the true *natural*, and, at the same time, *supernatural* religion, to which all outward Revelation must be subordinate. It is *natural*, because God has planted it in, and suited it to, man's *nature;* and it is *supernatural*, because it comes from God, and is the union of the nature of God with the nature of man. And the outward Revelation is subordinate to it, not in the sense of being inferior, as a manifestation of God's will, but in the sense of being a letter, and not a spirit, and of being both judged by it, and ultimately intended for its use, that is, for its awakening and nourishment.

"This does not imply that real truths may not be often presented to a man without meeting or awakening this consciousness in him: this, however, is not from any want of suitableness on their part, but from spiritual deadness on his; and therefore no one is justified, on this ground, in the rejection of a truth presented to him from without, and far less is the want of this consciousness or inward witness in any individual, or number of individuals, in reference to any doctrine, a proof against that doctrine; but what is asserted is this, that there is only so much of true religion in any man's soul as there is of this awakened consciousness; and that all doctrines held without this conscious perception of truth, but simply on an outward authority, although it be even that of an inspired man or an inspired book, nay, even on an inward authority, if that authority be only an impres-

sion, and not a real enlightening of the conscience, even though the doctrines be true in themselves, are mere notions or opinions, and not true religion.

"I believe that the objections which many feel to the doctrine of the inward witness of the Spirit often arise from a misapprehension of it. It is supposed, for example, that when a man says that he has the witness of the Spirit to any doctrine, or to the interpretation of any text, he is necessarily claiming infallibility for himself, at least on that particular point; but no one who really understands what the witness of the Spirit is, will make such a claim, for the Spirit witnesses not to intellectual, but to moral and spiritual truth. It is not a revelation to a man enabling him to solve an intellectual difficulty, such as an obscure passage of Scripture, or a disputed point of Church usage or history; it is the living sympathy and apprehension with which the heart answers to, and takes hold of, any announcement of the love or righteousness of God, and any claim which God makes on man to be conformed to His likeness, wherever these are found. When therefore a man of a right and spiritual mind thinks that he perceives such an announcement or such a claim, although his perception may be founded on an entire mistake of the meaning of the passage, he yet may have the true witness of God's Spirit within him to what he feels of life to his soul in it, no less certainly than if he had been right in his intellectual apprehension of the passage. For the view he has taken may be connected with announcements of God's nature, or of man's duty, most true in them-

selves, and most quickening to his own soul, and it is to these quickening truths alone that the witness refers.

"When I say that we are not left to lean on any outward authority for our knowledge of God, and of His ways towards us, let it not be thought that I am disparaging the Bible. Many most important truths are set before us in it, which never would have entered our hearts, had they not thus been set before us; nevertheless they are then only profitable, and then only truly believed, when they awaken within us a corresponding form of our inward spiritual consciousness, so that we recognise them henceforth as truths which we ourselves know to be truths, by conscious experience, and not merely on the outward authority of the Book.

"There are many facts in our intellectual experience analogous to this, which might be used to illustrate it. Thus, a man may be perfectly incapable of making any advance in mathematical science by his own original and unassisted efforts, and yet if Euclid be put into his hands, he may find himself quite able to follow and appreciate the reasoning, and thus to gain a very considerable acquaintance with the subject. His mind, in consequence, is filled with a new class of ideas, which he has acquired entirely from the reading of this book. And yet, if he has really apprehended it, it is not on the authority of the book that his conviction of the truth of any one of its propositions ultimately rests, but on his own personal discernment of their truth. We should not consider him to have entered

in the slightest degree into their meaning, if we found him resting his belief of them on the authority of the book, or on any outward authority whatever. Nor should we indeed call such a belief a mathematical belief at all. And yet, had not the book presented the truths outwardly to him, the inward intellectual types might have lain within him dormant for ever.

"No one supposes, in this case, that we detract from the importance of the book, by making it subordinate to the inward intellectual authority, and by asserting that no man can believe it rightly except by discerning its agreement with that authority within him, and that any kind of belief which does not discern truth in the subject is not a belief which suits the subject. We feel that the honour given to the book by one who discerns its truth is infinitely higher than that given by one who blindly rests in it, that, in fact, he alone really honours it, because he alone perceives its real value, and uses it for the purpose for which it was written.

"In like manner we do not detract from the importance or from the authority of the Bible, when we say that then only is its authority rightly acknowledged, or its true honour given to it, when we discern its agreement with the testimony of the spiritual witness within us, and perceive that its great importance consists in awakening our consciousness to the presence and the instructions of that spiritual witness.

"I believe that most people will acknowledge the justness

of this principle, so long as its application is limited to what are commonly called the truths of natural religion. Thus people do not rest their belief of the existence of a God on the authority of the Bible, nor their belief that God loves righteousness and hates wickedness, nor their belief of many other truths of the same order; because they find in themselves a living consciousness of these truths, corresponding to and authenticating the outward statement of them, which inward consciousness naturally becomes their authority for believing in them. But as soon as they enter upon the facts of Christ's history, and what are called the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, they think that there can be no other authority but that of the Inspired Book on which they can rest their belief.

"And yet if these truths are so beyond the bounds of natural religion as to awaken no corresponding living consciousness within us when the outward statements are presented, it is not easy to see how they can affect our character, or of what use the revelation of them could be to us; unless, indeed, we suppose that the intellectual acknowledgment of them is *followed* by the implantation of a corresponding living consciousness within the heart. But still in this case the conviction of their truth would rest on the inward consciousness thus created, and not ultimately or exclusively on the outward authority.

"If we found a man who was resting his belief of the existence of the sun, and of its relation to our earth, merely on a book of astronomy, we should infer that he did not

know what he was reading of, for if he really knew that the bright luminary which he was accustomed to see every day was the very same sun of which the book spoke, his belief of its existence would rather rest on his own personal experience than on any extraneous record whatever. His book of astronomy is written with a reference to things and to facts which are open to his observation and experience; and is then only really understood by him, and then only really of use, when he connects with it the results of his observation and experience.

"It would be a curious and eccentric phenomenon to see a man well versed in theoretical astronomy and natural history, thus walking forth into the world and viewing the various objects in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, without recognising in them the same objects of which his books treated, and with the laws of which he was so well acquainted through means of his books. Such a man would evidently have two worlds, perfectly unconnected,—the one the world of his experience, the other the world of his theory; and in consequence of this separation, his theory would be without the life of experience, and his experience would be without the light of theory.

"There is surely something very like this presented to us continually in the case of that great multitude of religious people, who separate their religious knowledge, received through Scripture, from their own personal consciousness of spiritual things, which I have here called Natural Religion. Whilst a man's belief of the being and character of Jesus

Christ rests *solely* on the Scripture record, it is manifest that he has never yet in his own mind connected or identified the idea of Jesus there given with any living reality of which he himself has a conscious experience. He reads that a glorious Sun has come into the moral system of man; he reads and believes the record; but he does not look for Him, nor expect to find Him, within the sphere of his own experience; nor does he identify the outward account of our Lord's life with anything which he feels or knows within his own heart; for if he did, his belief would no longer implicitly rest on the outward record, but on his own personal knowledge and experience, as agreeing with it. And yet Christ is there within him; and the purpose of the outward record is to draw his attention to this living power come into his own nature, to bless him there. But he separates the two, instead of identifying them; and thus, as I said above, his theory is destitute of life, and his experience is destitute of knowledge.

"The light must become the life. It can do so only when we recognise, in that inward radiance which is in the hearts of all men, the presence of Him who was born as a babe in the stable of Bethlehem. He who came there outwardly as the Light of the world is the same Christ, the same Word of God who shines within our hearts. When we know the voice which we hear there to be His voice, then we have power to become sons of God.

"Christianity is the unveiling of the true nature of conscience as the meeting-place between God and man. If a

man really knows what its voice is—whence it comes, and whither it goes—he will not fear to follow it, but will feel that his whole hope of well-being lies in becoming fully one with it; whereas, if he knows not this, he cannot choose but shrink from the self-denial and sufferings into which it necessarily leads. The Word is come into our nature that we may become one with it, and so ascend with it into heaven. We can ascend thither in no other way than by this union; for 'no man hath ascended up into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man.'

"When Nebuchadnezzar commanded his whole empire to worship the golden image which he had set up, we may be sure that all the Jews in Babylon heard the same voice within their consciences saying, 'Worship it not.' Those amongst them who knew not whence the voice came, and whither it led, and who only saw that the first step taken in obedience to it would lead into the fiery furnace, refused to trust themselves to its guidance. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, knowing that it came from God and returned to God, were not afraid to follow it, assured that it would take them with it to God, whatever difficulties might meet them on the way.

"On that occasion God gave an outward token of the security of those who thus yielded themselves to His Spirit's guidance, by bringing them uninjured out of the furnace. The Word went into the furnace with them; and led them out safe. But the Word often leads its followers into difficulties, out of which it does not appear to extricate them, so

that such a case could not be taken as a general chart of the way by which the Word leads men; and as it was desirable to have a chart which might truly mark the way by which, and the end to which the Word leads all men without exception, God sent Jesus Christ to be Himself our chart, by showing us in His own history the full consequences of following the Word. For Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh; and we see that, though in the flesh, He never listened to the voice of the flesh, which would have prompted Him to spare Himself, and to avoid many painful contests with the evil of the world, but went straight on, following the voice of the Spirit within whithersoever it led. And it led Him into distresses and persecutions, to insults and tortures and death, without delivering Him as the three Jews were delivered. He was laid in the grave; and thus to the eye of man it seemed that the voice of the Spirit had conducted its faithful follower to ruin. But this was in truth the way of deliverance, for then the glory of his history shone forth, and then it was proved that the Word indeed was life, and that as it came from God, so it led to God, for it raised Jesus from the dead, and exalted Him, in that body in which He had obeyed it, to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

"He who knows this history of Jesus, and recognises its oneness with that voice which he hears in his own conscience, is no longer in doubt what that voice is, or whether he may safely follow it. 'He (now) knows whence it cometh, and whither it goeth,"and thus it is that he is born of the Spirit.

"And it is only in this way (of accepting death) that man

ascends to heaven; for it is in this way alone that he really becomes one with Jesus; 'and no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.'

"If the voice in our conscience be the indication of God's actual presence within us, a knowledge that it is so is of immense importance to us; for thus we enter into the secret of God's love towards us, and of his purpose concerning us, that our hearts should be his temples, and that we should be one with Him, through Jesus Christ; and thus also we discover, that though in ourselves we are only ignorance and weakness, yet we have within our reach, because within the limits of our own nature, the infinite wisdom and the infinite strength of God to which we may unite ourselves, and are thus encouraged to run with confidence the race that is set before us.

"This aspect of conscience, and of its invariable working and power within us—its power of development—and its general meaning—throws great light upon the objects and purposes of God concerning us. It is plain, first of all, that He is what *it* is (otherwise He would not have implanted it within us); moreover, it is righteousness, and He is and must be righteousness, yea, perfect righteousness; then we gather, secondly, that He intends us to be what it is—in other words, what He Himself is—and that our whole life here is a course of education in righteousness, by means of conscience and the circumstances of life. What a cheering view is this of life, of death, of all things—of God,

of our own future, of the future of every human being!—revealing one glorious scheme for the perfecting of a creation external to God, until it becomes one and in unison with Himself!—the wills of the creature being subdued and brought into full harmony with God's will, by a free choosing of it on their part. No otherwise could it be so; for a will cannot be *made* (formed from without), it must grow and be the product of time and of education; it must *become* good by *choosing* to be good. Let us realize our position, and seek after light, and keep the end for which we were created steadfastly before us, wrestling with the daily events of life, as Jacob wrestled with the angel, until we find their true meaning, and become princes with God, prevailing until at last His name becomes fully known to us, and we (born into the perfect liberty of the children of God) grow up into Him in all things. Let us go on increasing in stature and likeness, as in knowledge; and this last cannot fail; as we grow in spiritual knowledge we *must* grow in likeness, for it is knowledge which makes likeness. God is a Spirit; and all the apprehension we can have of a spirit must come through knowledge. The object of Revelation is the unveiling of God, that we may see Him and know Him. Let nothing come between us and this Divine knowledge; no man, no angel. It is in Holy Scripture mainly that we find it. Blessed are they to whom it is given; accursed are they who take it away or hide the keys of it: they 'fill up the cup of wrath' upon themselves 'who forbid to speak it.' It is from lack of this knowledge that individuals and nations

perish; it is from lack of it that, notwithstanding the fact of His death, Christ has, as yet, tasted death (for so many) in vain. Let us spread this knowledge by dissemination of the Scriptures—the Holy Scriptures—those Scriptures which, when interpreted and read by conscience—each man, through the Spirit, for himself—make men holy by commending God to every heart.

"Sanctify us, Lord, by Thy truth; Thy word is truth. Amen."

The subjoined letter from the Reverend Dr. McLeod Campbell, in answer to questions raised as to the mode of recognising Divine light, and the character of the Divine guidance, by Roman Catholic and other records of Lives where there seems to us a misapprehension of their true nature, cannot fail to be interesting to those who have been exercised by such questions, as we believe it also affords a true solution of them :—

"*7th December*, 1869.

"I now return the letter and the book received together. I am thankful for the letter,—there being nothing which I more desire for all who are taking to themselves the privilege of free thought, or, to state it differently, who are awakening to the obligation of free thought, than that they should honestly concede to others what they claim for themselves in this respect; and this they will do in proportion as 'to think' means to them to listen to the voice of God. No

man can speak in the consciousness that he is taught of God without being saved by this consciousness from everything unbrotherly (illiberal, or impatient, or overbearing) in his dealing with those who do not see as he sees. If a man has indeed in some measure attained to the child-hearing of the 'Babe' to whom 'the Father reveals the Son,' and to the single eye which is filled with light, he is too much condemned in his own eyes by the slowness of heart to understand with which he charges himself, even while gratefully welcoming a measure of light; and, in the memory of the patience which has been extended to himself, is too thankful for the long-suffering of the Divine Teacher towards his brother, to take any other attitude than the meek and lowly one proper to scholars in the school of Christ, helping each other to learn, in the fellowship of the Great Teacher's own meekness. A leading journal holds that uncertainty is the great root and fountain of toleration. I believe that the faith of the dealing of God with the spirits of men—the faith of Divine teaching—is the true fountain of the toleration to which we are called—a toleration which is likely to abound in us in proportion as we are children of the light, not in proportion as we still grope in darkness. The truth is, that a chief source of intolerance is uncertainty, which tends to make men impatient of contradiction; just as concurrence is welcomed as helping to sustain the 'doubtsome faith.' While what calls itself 'belief' is but opinion, it seeks response for its own confirmation, and gets over the shake which contradiction gives to it most easily by depre-

cating the authority that contradicts, as being vitiated by ignorance, or inexcusable perversion of mind.

"This, however, though it harmonizes with the feeling of your correspondent, is not exactly the ground he takes. I am only saying, 'If we know anything truly, we are having the humbling experience of Divine teaching ("no flesh shall glory in His sight"), and feel ourselves thankful that the long-suffering patience for which we praise our Divine Teacher in our own case, He is extending to others also, whose progress we would aid, but whose slowness we dare not judge or chide.' It is a further and most just reflection, in realizing the Divine teaching, that those who are not seeing just as we see, may still be seeing something that *is* (is true), and which it would be the reward of a fair weighing of their thoughts that we should be helped by them to see, being what we may not yet have seen. For it is certain that God shows one aspect of truth to one man, and another to another; each being taught something which he will never have to unlearn, though the harmony—nay, the identity—of the teaching it may need a higher light to reveal. I therefore sympathize entirely with ——. But I am not answering your question, and in one view I do not feel that it admits of an answer. What I have attempted in 'Thoughts on Revelation' is an answer to your question, so far as all that truth is concerned which is embraced in the expression 'the light of life,' or contemplated by our Lord when He says that 'for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth;' or when He

says, 'I am the truth.' But put in connection with the little book which I now return,* and your saying that 'the recognition of inward light characterizes the Roman Catholic Church as much as ours:'—to the question, 'How are we to know that a Revelation is such indeed?' I have no answer to offer beyond what I said to you, viz., that the idea of a communication direct from God implies that the knowledge that it is from Him is conjoined with the communication. All responsibility for the due response implies that there is no room left for the question, 'How can I know that this comes to me from God?' The manner or nature of the certainty imparted may be unknowable apart from experience, and so what no man can explain or commend to another. I would expect that it should be thought it should be so; that raises no doubt as to its being possible for God thus personally to communicate with men. Has God made personal intercourse of man with man possible? and how should it be impossible for Him to make personal intercourse of man with God Himself possible? All Revelation, as distinct from that teaching of God which is experienced in seeing light in God's light, implies such a possibility—rather, is such a fact; seeing light in light, *i.e.*, being in light which is its own witness, might have been, in the higher region of religion, like, in a lower region, the attainment of mathematical certainty; though it is not so in point of fact, the part of the Holy Spirit in our enlightening

* "Sketches of Holy and Devoted Lives: Madame de B. D'Honet and Mère Geoffroy of the Sacré Cœur." Published by Philips, London.

being our being taught of God. But Revelation, as such, implies a receiving from God in a special sense; and the certainty that accompanies it is not merely the certainty which belongs to light, nor the hearing of God's voice which belongs to it merely that consciousness of Divine teaching which all are called to know. Revelation is a personal communication, having its Divine authority distinct from the light discerned in that which is communicated, and present, therefore, when the communication (as may be the case) is not of a nature to have light in itself.

"As to the recognition of 'internal light' in this book,* it is in no way internal light as self-evidencing light; for it in no way connects itself with our Lord's appeal, 'If I speak the truth, why then do ye not believe me?' That highest sense of Divine Light I have never seen recognised in the teaching of the Church of Rome; and, indeed, to recognise it would not accord with the place given to Authority. But what this book gives as historical fact in the experience of those pious women is rather, if real, akin to that personal dealing of God with individuals of which I have just spoken, and which we are slow to recognise when not recorded in the canonical Scriptures; though the occasional experience of it, as continued in the Church, is alleged, not by Romanists only, but also by Protestants —especially such sects as the Wesleyan Methodists—but I see more or less of it in the accounts of all those intensifyings of religious feeling which claim to be 'awakenings.'

* Lives of Mesdames D'Honet and Geoffroy.

But as I have said that I am prepared to find the experience of a Divine communication to be what one man may not be able to commend to another, so do I feel no necessity laid upon me to judge the claim of any experience of another to this character. If one professes to have received from God what he presents to me for my faith, that is another matter; my responsibility as to receiving or rejecting will turn on the measure of commendation to my conscience in the sight of God of that for which the obedience of faith is demanded; that is to say, if it belong to the region of truth in the higher sense. If it is of a lower nature, and not capable of being so tested, then I am thrown on other considerations. Such intimations of the Will of God were known in the Church at the beginning. If they were restored, the means of a rational dealing with them, such as would make obedience a reasonable service, we may believe would be restored with them. But I will add, in reference to such records as this little volume contains (and the Church of Rome has doubtless many similar records), that the craving for, and valuing of, such intimations of the Divine Will for practical guidance is connected with what I regard as an altogether unspiritual apprehension of that obedience to the Divine Will to which we are called as our life. The words, 'Lo! I come to do thy will, O God,' have, I believe, no lower reference than to that Will of God in respect of which God is; that which He is, is righteous, is holy, is good, is love.

"This is a high and difficult subject, and underlies all

religion; being, in truth, the mind of Christ, and our calling to have that mind in us. I only refer to it now as that conception of Christianity, in the light of which all that ordering of acts and movements which has such a place given to it in such lives as those is seen in its entire distinctness from the Divine Life.

"Do not let me seem to have no sympathy with that desire for that Divine guidance in all our paths which is felt by devout minds outside of the Church of Rome as well as in it. This we desire, and welcome when granted—receiving it in various forms—and sometimes more, sometimes less, pronounced. But woe be to us if we think of such guidance as that to which, if we yield, we shall be found 'following God as dear children walking in love—as Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us.'

"12*th December*, 1869.

"I have gone carefully over these preceding pages, and venture to send them, hoping that in some measure they convey my meaning. But you know my misgivings, and how difficult it is for me to write, even for a friend's eye, what I could easily venture to say; for I would speak with the security that questions would elicit clearer statements, if I am not at once understood. The distinction which I seek to mark between 'Revelation,' as such, and that Divine teaching which enables us to receive Revelation as light, is one which, as I conceive, an inspired contributor to the inspired Scriptures would perfectly understand—as, perhaps,

in one sense, such a man alone could understand it; for while we may all know what it is to be taught of God, and therefore in His light to see light, we are not all—if any—knowing by experience what it is to receive a Revelation direct from God; and, though we may feel that there must be such a difference as I recognise, we think of it in the dark as to the one of these two experiences. The inspired man, who, also, is spiritually taught of God, knows both.

"I see I have said that the Divine guidance alleged in the case of these pious women, 'if real, has been akin to' what I have been speaking of. But I feel as if this were conceding more than is right. What I have been really considering was such question as, 'How did Abraham know that God was the speaker when he believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness?' Doubtless, it was his believing God—his being 'strong in faith, giving glory to God, believing that what He had promised He was able also to perform'—that was 'reckoned righteousness.' But the righteousness of his trust presupposed certainly that it was God that promised; and how did he know that? The distance between the question in this relation, and what are so far similar questions suggested to your mind by these lives of nuns, is immense; nor even in the element of certainty are they alike; for these nuns had still recourse to their spiritual guides to decide for them whether these supernatural intimations were to be acted upon. While, therefore, this little book has led to your question, and, so far, is meant to be covered by what I have now written,

still, both at —— and now, my desire has been to mark a distinction between the inspiration or reception of Divine communications which we believe to have been known by those through whom we have received Revelation, and that teaching of God which enables us to profit by Revelation. This distinction I am the more anxious to mark, because it seems in danger of being lost sight of in our insisting, as we rightly do, on the promise, 'They shall be all taught of God.'"

THE END.

PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., CITY ROAD, LONDON.

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY

THE PRESENT UNBELIEF

THE PRESENT UNBELIEF.

THE question which, at this moment, is exercising thoughtful and religious men the most relates to the alarming progress of Infidelity. It is time to awake to its nature and extent, if it is real. We do not doubt its reality, or the greatness of its extent; nay, we believe that it is on the increase, and that it will grow. But we do not look on it as hopeless, or with unmitigated fear, for we are under the impression that the present is no final, but merely a transition stage, wherein the things which have served their purpose, and become effete, are being superseded by those things which are real, and cannot pass away. "It signifieth," we believe, "but the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." No doubt, the present condition is dark and formidable. Not only the reality and integrity of Revelation, but the Being and Providence of God Himself are called in question. And this Infidelity is everywhere present; it is, no doubt, less pronounced among ourselves than among the continental nations, but it may be found among ourselves day

by day with increasing strength, for the causes which produce it there are present here, perhaps with a difference, but a difference which, if in some respects favourable, in others has aspects even of a graver character. Anyway we should be prepared to meet and to mitigate this infidelity, as we believe it possible to do beforehand, by lessening those evils in which it finds its support, and by fortifying minds likely to be exposed to it, so as to enable them to meet and repel the mischief when it arrives. A well-informed and conscientious journal,* writing the other day, remarks that nothing shows more the power and extent of present unbelief than the change which has come over the spirit of Scepticism. It is no longer apologetic, sarcastic, secret; it has become public, aggressive, fanatic. Neither in this country nor yet in America has it as yet risen to this pitch, but it is on the way to it, and is only restrained among ourselves by causes which ere long may cease to operate. On the continent of Europe, at this moment, and in its southern portions more particularly, men want to kill priests simply because they are priests; and at every revolutionary outbreak, whether in Spain, Italy, Southern France, Austria, or Belgium, priests are the first victims, just because they are priests. Again, in Northern Germany, we have lately seen a clergyman fired at in a Protestant church, simply because he recited aloud the ordinary Creed or Christian confession. These, no doubt, are individual cases, but they indicate a great and extensive, although, it may be, latent, un-

* *The Spectator.*

belief. The causes of unbelief, no doubt, in these different countries are different; and opposite causes, in fact, are at work at the opposite ends of Europe. In the South, Revelation was rejected because it had ceased to be any Revelation, and had become a mere arbitrary law, enforced by public and domestic tyranny. In the North, because Revelation had become but a matter of speculation, and a thesis for intellectual exercise apart from moral benefit or blessing, while it was upheld at the same time and rendered obligatory by legal force. In the South, Infidelity is produced by the demand to believe that which is incredible. In the North, by a demand too often for that which, if credible, ought not to be believed.

And the infidelity has extended to the clergy themselves. "I hear a great whispering of doubt on the subject of Religion," says a priest of the South to himself, "and I find the echo of it within my own heart. Sitting alone by my fireside, I cannot but ask to what purpose is this waste? I live apart, and for my office' sake, and what good do I get by it? I sigh and have nothing; I consecrate the Eucharist, but there is consciously to me no presence but my own; without another miracle of Bologna, I feel as unable to believe as the Bolognese.* Somebody, I suppose, once saw the things which I preach about, but *I* never saw them, I receive all things on authority. But is not this enough? I hold the Catholic Faith, the faith of Spain, of France, of

* The Eucharistic wafer is reported to have shed drops of blood at Bologna to convince an unbeliever.

Italy, nay, of the world; for the Orientals, in truth, hold the same. And the Catholic Faith is ours. In the *Filioque* objected to by the Orientals, the Protestants are with us. I hold the Universal Faith, the Faith of Christendom, centered in and tested by our Infallible Head. Still I see not, and they see not. They go by the word of others—of those gone before them. There is no 'open vision,' and I say with St. Thomas, that 'seeing is believing!'" Now something of this sort is going on all over Christendom, in the North as in the South, in the East as in the West, with differences connected with the special circumstances of the locality, but in kind and character the same kind of question and reply, the same latent, or, it may be, open unbelief, the same infidelity, the same demand for "open vision" to put an end to it. Some of the best, no doubt, call out in the language of the Prophet, "O that thou wouldst bow the heavens and come down." It would seem that without seeing there is to be no believing, and nothing is to be seen. Signs have ceased, outpourings of the Spirit, which are clearly spiritual prophetic announcements, have come to an end. The tests of Positivism and Materialism are applied to Revelation. Sacraments are called upon to show their nature and power, if they be what sometimes they are alleged to be; the Church to give no uncertain sound; the Scriptures to be infallible; and the Church, the Sacraments, even the Scriptures themselves, break down before such handling. The demands for "open vision," that the Church should show her supernatural powers, that the

Sacraments should be seen to be what they claim to be, that Scripture should have one infallible type, that Articles and Confessions should speak one language, all these demands are made, and none of them are complied with. The ministry in many Churches struggle with their Confessions, and warm themselves in the struggle, and say, "Aha, aha, we have seen the fire." But the warmth is from the struggle, not from the Confession. There may be fire, there may be light, more or less, here or there, but certainly nowhere is there the "open vision." Man struggles in the dark, as Jacob with the angel, wrestling with the unknown, who will not tell his nature nor yet let man go. Europe plunges in the darkness; many a gallant ship goes down, making no sign. The attempt of the present Pope, when closely scrutinized, is but a frantic effort to strike a light. He feels he has not light enough, he knows that such a want is generally felt, he declares that *he* is the Light, that he must be the Light, and shall be. He says, "Fiat lux," and "Ego lux." It is to become a dogma. And this, no doubt, because it is needed, and felt to be. Yet is the nature of spiritual light producible or discernible by such means? Assuredly not. Spiritual truth is not of a sort to be made or discerned by such methods. This work is but the work of men in ignorance, not willing to confess it; of men in doubt, not willing to acknowledge it; of men probably in ignorance and doubt, and not knowing their condition, although the acts in which they are engaged make it manifest to others. This is but the sad spectacle of men who, having a want,

know not how to supply it; who, having an inkling of the truth, know not the way to it; of men who have some traditions of living water, and are trying to discover where and what it is, but who are searching in the wrong direction and in the wrong way; who are seeking to verify the water by the channel, not the water by what it is. This mode of verification, which is not only the characteristic of the Church of Rome but of many Churches, is doubtless fundamentally erroneous, not only from the false conclusions to which it evidently leads, and the contrivances which it requires to bolster up such conclusions, but in the very nature of spiritual truth, whether revealed or otherwise, and is one of the main sources of present unbelief, if not the main source, as with the nations of the Continent. And, no doubt, the present convulsive attempt to construct an infallible test and external source is a confession that the true source and test of spiritual truth are unknown, and is a manifestation of unbelief (no doubt unconscious) in (so called) Spiritual High Places. It is a pathetic evidence of the want of that which, if possible at all, already must exist; and which, if it exist not, cannot be created; which, if it be, must be the property of all, and cannot be made the prerogative of any. The present unbelief may be attributed to three leading causes: indifference, dislike, and inability to believe. Indifference, from some of the ordinary reasons which make religious matters secondary, or neglected; dislike, as trenching upon regions more agreeable to the ordinary mind; and inability, from a supposed want of

evidence for Revelation, or power in its objects to produce belief.

The first, that which arises from indifference, has many producing causes in the present day, especially in this country:—the increase of wealth, which, in the upper classes and with the young, tends to make life mainly a recreation; luxury, fostered in young men by public-school and university habits, where too often a preponderance is now given to amusement over study, and further heightened by the length of holidays, which when passed at home (being also considered there but as holiday) have little effect, save of still further relaxing the old respect for religion and the parental relations. Young men in too many cases now look on their father but as their banker and provider of amusement, so that it has been said, with more wit than propriety, that "of old, Abraham offered up Isaac, but now Isaac offers up Abraham." Luxury among young men in our days has been much developed by the introduction of club life, and the inordinate use of tobacco, and there is a reappearance, it is said, among young men in some professions of evils which had nearly disappeared. Add to this our increasing familiarity with continental manners and nations, where little being known or felt of their more sacred and profound aspects, all that is generally brought home is a shaking and removal of our own religious aspects, by the variety, contradiction, or carelessness seen abroad as to that which used to be most valued among ourselves. That other unbelief which arises

from dislike of religion may without difficulty be traced to its root. The non-coming of man to light when and because his deeds are evil is of universal experience, and is as patent as a reason now as ever it was. The only remark we would make on this head is that, as the rampant and graver sins of men are not at this time by any means what once they were, and the general amount of virtue probably greater than ever it was in the world before, we should not be disposed to range the present infidelity largely under this head as its producing cause. The great and most formidable cause, no doubt, is inability to believe. This we count the most formidable, because it affects many of the leading and thinking portions of mankind, who, it may be, few in number at first, sooner or later (and now because of the printing press, much sooner than before) influence with their opinions the masses of mankind. Many of these announce their inability to believe in Revelation (or even in God Himself) from want of sufficient evidence, or want of power in the objects of Revelation to produce belief.

It would of course be perfectly out of the question to attempt to supply, in a paper such as this, any adequate answer even to a limited number of the reasons given for inability to believe on the grounds in question; and any reasons given would probably meet the needs of but a few, general objections being frequently taken from an individual stand-point. Nevertheless we shall attempt to give some reasons for belief, which, as they have been of

use in cases within our knowledge, may also be to some to whom we are not aware that they have as yet occurred. But here, by way of preface, we would make two remarks. First, that however difficult it may be to assign reasons for believing in Revelation or in God, it will be found in experience infinitely more difficult to assign reasons for not believing. And next, as to one of the great difficulties assigned, that there is not sufficient proof from outward evidence, or from want of "open vision," in regard to the higher aspects of Revelation, such character of proof would not be applicable, or is of little value, the true nature of the objects themselves lying in a different region, so that in the highest sense as to these it is ever true that "if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead:" that is, the nature of proof for such things lies in the inward and not in the outward world, in the things themselves and in us, not outside of them, or of ourselves. Into the consideration of proofs for the Being and Providence of God we shall not therefore enter here, save in the way of some general observations. But into the proof of the authenticity of Revelation we must venture at some length, as we hope to offer some additional proof in its behalf by trying to regard it from a more than usually extended basis.

The authenticity of Revelation is impugned because of the insufficiency, it is alleged, of the evidence on which it rests, and from the inadequacy of the objects revealed to produce belief.

The external evidence for the truth of Revelation, it is said, has ceased or has broken down; supernatural signs do not now exist; the Church, which was its pillar and ground, cannot herself be identified, and the records of Revelation themselves are vitiated by the admixture of human error. To the first objection we must repeat, that for proof of the higher aspects of Revelation, external evidence is very secondary and is not necessary: that these stand by their own strength, and are accredited by their own might. There is no proof for these required in the way of "open vision," or demonstration; their nature is not a subject of vision. Outward signs and demonstrations lie outside of them, and are no infallible proof. The evidence must lie within Revelation itself, and be in the thing revealed. If that is properly furnished, the objects are sufficient to produce belief. The objects must first be made known ere we can realise their power; but this is not difficult to accomplish. For the objects are simple, they lie on the surface, and offer themselves to the simplest passer-by; that is, if set forth as at first by Christ and His Apostles, and seen in the open vision of their manifested life. The question is, is this now done? Infidelity in Revelation demands a previous question; whether this infidelity exists as to Revelation truly, or as to that which has been set forth as Revelation? We think the latter, and that Revelation, generally speaking, has not been rightly set forth. The problem then first resolves itself into the fact that the infidelity complained of does not so much regard

Revelation itself as that which has been set forth as Revelation, and that it is a false manifestation of it which is the great cause of the present infidelity.

We do not scruple to say that, as a rule, for the last eighteen hundred years, with few exceptions, Christianity has not been set forth as it was at first; that the teaching of Christ and of His Apostles has been much misconceived and misrepresented. Believing in the Divine nature and origin of Revelation, and looking at its first manifestation, we cannot doubt but that this has been the case. But we do not believe that this need be the case, or will always be the case; on the contrary, we believe that so far from Christianity being a thing which has been tried and found wanting, has had its time and is now on the wane, as is supposed by many, especially of the continental nations, it has never yet been fairly represented or understood save at the outset, and that its real advent has yet to come; that its golden age is in the future and not in the past, and that it is to come by its true nature and meaning being first better realised and then made known.

If we look at the greater part of the world since the Advent of Christ, especially in those portions where He was first preached—in Asia, Africa, and Europe—what do we see? Christianity superseded by Mahometanism in the two former, and in the latter such aspects of Christianity as few among us will venture to say correspond to the Christianity of the New Testament. After the first few generations Christianity appears to have degenerated in those regions into another

and inferior religion. Now this must have been from its having been inadequately set forth; for, rightly set forth, we cannot doubt that as a religion (taking no higher grounds) it is morally superior to that which superseded it there—the religion of Mahomet; and that the greater, if it had been rightly set forth, could not have been overcome by the less. And further, it is evident, from their own writings and concurrent history, that the teachers of Christianity in after-ages (generally speaking) taught a very different religion from that of Christ and His Apostles; and it is still more evident that the Churchmen of the middle-ages, even in Europe (that is, the masses of men there and then called Christian), to judge by the records of their lives which we have, had a Christianity of a very different and inferior stamp to that of its first teachers. Even the monuments of mediæval piety, as they are called, which are externally, many of them, very great and glorious, have a history, and inculcate a religion, which is, generally speaking, not that of the New Testament. We are far from undervaluing those monuments, least of all the great mediæval educational foundations; but the arrangements for the character of Divine service, the theory and practice of monasticism and conventual life, are not so much, we believe, in accordance with, as antagonistic to that ideal of life, and to those relations of man with God and his neighbour, which are set forth and enjoined in the record of Revelation.

There is a great difference between the Christianity of

Christ and His Apostles and that of all subsequent persons and times, and a sudden and unfathomable gulf between the Sacred Scriptures and even the very best writings of all succeeding ages. Why this is so, it is not easy to say; why that which is intrinsically superior should succumb to that which is inferior, can only assuredly be explained on the supposition that the superior had not been properly presented. But is this a full explanation? Have we not the same difficulty in secular history? Why, for example, should such nations as the Turks and Tartars have overthrown the superior civilization of Greece and Rome? Why should the higher forms of life (on geological evidence) be superseded at times by lower? It is no answer to say, "They became effete." For that they should become effete is equally a mystery. Such ebbs, probably, are needful; while progress is still the rule, other climes and forces seem to drain the water to other regions. But why should there be, as it were, but a limited supply of water? We cannot tell. Yet doubtless the *immediate* cause of the decadence is the deterioration of the superior influence. And Christianity, no doubt, as a matter of fact, became inadequately set forth all but immediately after its first propagation. It fell from its high ideal, at all events in its original seats, and it has never regained it. But it has also fallen away among ourselves, and this not only in mediæval times, but in latter periods also. There was, it is true, in mediæval Europe a great revival of primitive Christianity at one epoch—the fifteenth and

sixteenth centuries, the epoch of the Reformation—a revival and restoration which has in great part continued, though not wholly so. But that revival was not without its drawbacks. The Reformation was not in all respects wholly beneficial or restorative. It had certain objects in view, and in the main it accomplished these. But with these it accomplished others which were not intended, perhaps, but were inseparably bound up with these, and which were not beneficial. It had, for example, to destroy certain false doctrines of the Church of Rome; it was necessary to overthrow the conception that individual reason is valueless or improper in matters of religion or revelation, and it had to disprove the magical efficacy attributed to the sacraments. It had to fight its battles with the readiest instruments it could find for its purpose. It found certain propositions very suitable, such as the doctrine of justification by faith only, and the doctrine of grace, or the decrees of God—as they were then called—the doctrine, as we now call it, of individual election—the election, that is, of individuals to salvation by God's immediate decree. When these weapons had achieved their purpose, it was very natural that they should be honoured. Such honour, accordingly, was given them, but more than was due inevitably followed. Those who did not know the real merits of the case, by not having been present at the time, came to put a false value on the instrumentality by which the deliverance had been accomplished. Intrinsic worth became attributed to the instrumentality, and that

followed with the distinctive tenets of the Reformation which had been experienced before in Rome and Judea. What the Jews did with the brazen serpent was done with the formulas of the Reformation, and no second Hezekiah stood up to reduce them to their proper place. The acceptance of intellectual formula came into the place of sacramental efficacy, and the saints' worship of Rome was superseded by that of the personal views of the Reformers. The doctrine of election, as made prominent by the Reformation, became, however, that which afterwards went farthest to disturb the fair proportions of the original Revelation. For a false doctrine of election was set up in place of the true, and a prominence was given to it in some Churches which went far to absorb into itself all the other aspects of Revelation. It is true that a doctrine of election was held by the ante-Reformation Churches, and is contained in Revelation, but it was not the doctrine which eventually grew out of the teaching of the Reformers. A co-equal doctrine, no doubt, was implied, if not formally held, as a consequence of their sacramental theories, by the ante-Reformation Churches, which practically came to the same thing. For their sacraments were held by them to be so necessary and efficacious that all not benefited by them were relegated to the same position as the non-elect by the post-Reformation doctrine; but it was reserved for this latter divinity to draw out a doctrine of election, and state its consequences to that extent which came to prevail afterwards, and which we think has been the main cause of

unbelief and of the obscuration of Revelation in this country. For it has been stated in no obscure terms by some Churches amongst us which rose into prominence since the Reformation, that the doctrine of election signifies that Almighty God has created some men for no other purpose (as they express it) but to show forth His glory in their final destruction; and this not in the sense of annihilation, but in the sense of their being consigned to eternal torment. Inferentially, as we have said, the mediæval Churches by their doctrine of the sacraments implied something of the same sort. It was reserved, however, for the Churches of the post-Reformation period to conceive the doctrine in all its nakedness. A doctrine of election, in the struggle with Rome, being found of infinite importance in the destruction of the belief in the magical results attributed to sacraments, a perverted view of election came to take a place no less destructive of original Revelation. We are far from saying that there is no foundation for the doctrine of election in Revelation, or in the aspect of nature. No one can cast his eye over the surface of the earth, and not be convinced of the truth of some such doctrine. For not only are there superior races of men and animals,—men and animals, that is, not only relatively superior to other races, but individual men and animals superior to others of their own race; there are feebler animals, of the same sort, among beasts of burden, and street Arabs in our great cities close to the wealthy and highly educated; and these, no doubt, evince the existence of an election, and, so far

as this world goes, and as far as we see naturally, it seems to be absolute. And the above doctrine of election is but a corollary to this fact, only carrying on the inequality into another world where, it informs us, it is stereotyped. But is this the meaning of Revelation? Did Christ set forth this? Was Revelation given to confirm such a doctrine? Certainly not. Yet we wonder where it is taught that there is Infidelity. Happily, it now begins to be suspected not only that Christianity teaches no such doctrine, but that, rightly understood, it came to make up for and reverse the teaching of nature; that Revelation, so far from teaching such doctrine, had for one of its main objects to explain and explode it—to explain present appearances and to justify the present inequality by a Revelation of future equality, or at least, of justice, and by giving us the meaning of the contradictions which now we see. Revelation teaches us the immortality of the soul—it brings in another world, as Columbus did, to correct the wants, to explain the apparent injustice, rectify the inequalities of this; not indeed by showing us Dives seated at the feet of Lazarus, but that there is a good purpose and plan in all God's works, and in the present life also, which will be fully and adequately explained hereafter, and that the difficulties which here oppose us will then be removed out of sight. It teaches us that we must not interpret the whole by a part, but the part by the whole, and that we must wait for the completion of the whole; that at present we see but part. Revelation comes to make known the character of God,

and with that key to enable us to unlock the hidden things of darkness. It proclaims that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. There is no part of His Revelation which puts darkness in the place of God. The main and final aspect and end of Revelation is to show the justice of God; that love and justice are one. But this aspect has been much put in abeyance—formally, by the doctrines to which we have adverted, both before and since the Reformation; and Revelation having been thus improperly presented, these false aspects being taken for Revelation, it is no wonder that there is unbelief regarding it. The unbelief complained of relates not so much to that which is Revelation as to something which has been substituted for it, and therefore it is that unbelief arises not so much from the insufficiency of outward evidence, or because the objects revealed are not sufficient to produce belief, as that Revelation in its entirety has not been seen. Revelation has been either mainly set forth as an apparatus working by incomprehensible means, or as a confirmation of the Divinity of the worst aspects of nature; and can we then wonder that it is not believed? Can men, when sometimes it is set forth as little or anything superior to the heathen conceptions from which it expressly claimed to be a deliverance, believe such to be a Revelation? The definitions of God too often among ourselves, of God under the name of Christ Jesus, or the anointed Saviour, have been too similar to the heathen—to Saturn devouring his children, painted, no doubt, in milder colours, and

clothed in decent cloud, but very near the old heathen conception, the old pictures of the Greeks. Logical necessity required it, it was said: if this aspect of God is not true, neither is the other; Revelation sets forth the one just as much as the other. If the threatenings of God are not true, or to be believed, neither are the promises, it was said, of Revelation; and no man stood up to cry, "Perish all promises bought at such a price! I will go out into the dark holding on to nothing rather than to this; I will descend into the deep, fearing no evil—for none can be greater than this." But men feared to say this, feared to think it, feared to lose Revelation by thinking it, not seeing that what they retained was that which put Revelation in danger. They did not fear to lose God, or put Him in danger. But God was not only in danger, but lost, by such a belief. And the evil was that men did not know that He was lost, that by such belief, all that was good in God, all that was truly God, all that was worth having in God was thus lost; and that that which they had saved was that which put God in danger and was the cause of His loss. For the only thing to put God in danger is to imagine Him to be such an one as we can have no confidence in, such an one as affords no ground for confidence, or of whom, at the best, the character and motives are unknown. But this is to reverse the very object of Revelation, which is to give us the knowledge of God, and such knowledge as shall give us ground for confidence, as showing God not to be worse, but better than ourselves; better in that in which we are best: and

that such knowledge of Him should be the ground of our trust. Such as that of which we have spoken was no Revelation, but the darkening of Revelation; the Revelation of nature was better than this. For by it a man could say, "I know what God is from what I ought to be; I know what I ought to be, and that what I ought to be He surely is. I, even I, am good unto my children; how much more surely so is God, that Father who made us all, and not we ourselves! Surely He is Lord because He is good; best in all that is Most High. And I know what goodness is. I will hold fast unto this, to this as God, that God must be this; to this I will hold fast, should I let all else go." Man might thus have rectified Revelation by nature, but man did not do it, he had made Revelation not a lightening of, but a darkening of nature, and therefore no Revelation. But none saw this or said it if he saw it, for fear of consequences. What was at stake was not seen; and the consequence was that religion perished, for Revelation was not believed. And, no doubt, Revelation perishes when God is lost: for what remains is but a residuum of evil, and God is lost out of Revelation, when the good of God, God's goodness, is taken out of it. Of course men losing God does not affect His being, or his relations to them, but the benefit of a true belief and knowledge perishes to them with their loss of the sense of it. The right knowledge of God was overborne by the supposed necessity for the preservation of a doctrine which, in their belief, was part of the divine structure, and which could not be touched without risk to the whole build-

ing. And for fear of this risk, that for which the building was alone valuable perished. They did not distinguish the good foundation from its evil superstructure, and saving the one, they lost the knowledge and possession of the other. It was as if a bride were to take her marriage papers in preference to her husband, and deemed her ring the security of his fidelity. Alas! how many take religion for their God, instead of God for their religion!* There can be no question that this doctrine of election, as it is taught and exists in the standards of some Churches, has much helped to cause unbelief when it is deemed to be a portion of the integrity of Revelation, and when it is thought that the whole is bound up with the maintenance of this part. And no wonder, if there are many instances of it being taught as we hear it once, not very long ago, in a northern parish, where the clergyman, having preached that there were many of the souls of little children now in hell, he gave for a reason, that "God must have specimens of sinners of all ages." Such doctrine must produce unbelief even among the clergy themselves—an unbelief which, if unconscious, still has the effect of paralyzing and destroying an otherwise effective ministry. As, for instance, a preacher strong in this doctrine will ascend a pulpit, and will assert the doctrine of eternal reprobation. "The wicked shall be turned into hell" (he takes for his text), "and all the nations that forget God." Hell he describes as "a place of endless and unutterable terror and torture." He is earnest and urgent

* T. Erskine.

on his hearers to avoid so terrible an end. He draws harrowing pictures of its state, he himself feels their force. He descends from his pulpit, he retires to his vestry. By and by, he will dine with one of his parishioners, and what then happens? He will hand a lady down to dinner. He will smile and laugh, he will amuse his fair companion, and be the life of the company for the rest of the evening. He retires to rest with the full consciousness that he has spent a useful and pleasant day. Does he still believe that three-fourths of mankind are on their way to eternal torment, and that multitudes are now there? That the majority of those with whom he dined, and with whom he spent so pleasant an evening, are shortly to be relegated there—that is, consigned for ever to torture and torment? Should he, could he, have gone on at that dinner table as he did, if he had believed it? He could not: he could not have been such a monster. He did not, therefore, and does not believe it. And his flock? They did not, and do not. They would not, were it for no other reason than their pastor's good fellowship with them after his discourse. They did not, and do not believe. But more than this follows—not believing this, do they believe his other doctrines? We think not. Now this comes of saving the bad at the expense of the good. While the bad is not believed, the good is lost.

No error can be greater than an attempt to preserve a logical consistency in Revelation at the expense of Morality: whether the scale be large or small, the result is ever the same; it is in the case before us simply—unbelief.

When a clergyman inculcates a doctrine which the heart cannot receive, all else he teaches is likely to be rejected with it, and in this case men cannot help themselves, for their instructor tells them that all he teaches is bound up together, and stands or falls together. And in this way no doubt they do. And if on a large scale, what is the consequence? Universal scepticism. Let us look at this on a wide field, as, for example, in the interdicts of the Popes. The Popes at one time inflicted interdicts wholesale; whole nations were interdicted; and that very often for trifling causes, for acts with which the nation itself had often very little or nothing to do. Interdicts were inflicted on multitudes of innocent individuals who could not help themselves; on subjects for the crime of a king over whom they had no control, and for that, too, which at times was no crime in the king—sometimes even for a virtue in the king, for his refusing to act, for example, in an unrighteous way, as in allying himself with the temporal power of the Pope in some act of aggression. For this a whole nation has been more than once laid under an interdict. Now, an interdict means a denial of the means of grace in ordinances. And, according to the doctrine of the Church of Rome, such means are necessary for salvation. What was the consequence of such interdicts? Did the nation believe that hell would be their result? Did the Pope himself believe it? He could not be such a monster as to inflict such a punishment if he did. But he did not, and they did not. What then was the result? Simply a general infidelity

as to the truth of Revelation. And no doubt this has been one main cause of much of the unbelief of the Continent. For there they identify, as they must, the cause of Revelation with that of Rome; for, generally speaking, there is no other manifestation of it. Again, it must have been observed that interdicts have seldom or never been inflicted for moral reasons. They have been used but as a weapon for the secular objects of religion. In Ireland, for example, where their use would have been of great moral benefit in the repression of crime, they have never been inflicted for that purpose even when crime has been most flagrant and abundant. What is the inference? To the thinking portion of the community, that there is no moral aspect of Revelation, at least in the opinion of the Church of Rome. A false orthodoxy, a wrong conception of that which Revelation is, presses multitudes into unbelief in Revelation: natural righteousness throws over an unrighteous theology, and the foundations of Revelation as thus conceived of are overthrown. And when thus conceived of we cannot regret it. But does not this explain much of the present scepticism? As yet scepticism is but in a latent form among ourselves, but soon, we believe it will show itself differently; soon we expect to see an open and pronounced unbelief; an unbelief taking revenge, as it were, upon those who have been its cause. And we cannot call such a revenge unrighteous, should it come. For a theology which sets forth God as a destroyer, and not a Saviour, is such a perversion of the gospel as to call for vengeance. Scepticism is at present

careless and cold, but as it awakens it will put on different aspects. This has begun already to show itself in Southern Europe. We expect it ere long in Northern. It is not at present a Phinehas-like testimony for the glory of God, but it may come to be so. At present it is but the reaction of a natural justice; but eventually, no doubt, all churches and teachers will be judged and punished which have had for their object to debar men from God—men who have paid the expenses of such teachers. Having been shut out, they will themselves proceed to shut out; for the wheel of time brings round such revenges even in heavenly things.

If Revelation is set forth so as to give no explanation of the mysteries of nature or of life, nay, if, on the contrary, it be made to add to and increase them, do we wonder that there is scepticism regarding it? For what in such a case does it do? What is then its character? Is it no Revelation, no unveiling, that is, no deliverance, no Gospel? If it be no explanation of Providence, but a cloud over the Divine Image, if no light, but an increase of darkness, can there be any reason for accepting it, anything but scepticism and rejection of it? Within itself, however, it contains assertions that it is the contrary of all these things. It calls itself a revealer of mysteries, and such a revealer as to be a gospel. It proclaims that that which it causes us to see is good: so good that the instrument itself which shows it is called by the name of goodness; a gospel, or good news. One of its chief apostles tells us that he comes to reveal; to show the

mystery hid from ages and generations, nay, from the foundation of the world, and that it is no less than an opening up of the principles of the Divine Government, and that these are such, and so good, as, when known, to produce joy in those who know them. "Rejoice," he says therefore, "rejoice evermore." He comes to reveal, he says, as having been initiated himself—as having been initiated himself to initiate others, that that which he has they may have. And this is the Knowledge of God—the knowledge of God in the face, or by the face, of Jesus Christ. Is it thus that Christ and Revelation have been set forth since his time? Is it not true that it has often been otherwise?—that instead of a Revelation, and Christ its central light, the Gospel has often been set forth as a darkness, and Christ the centre of that darkness? Not Christ coming as the Saviour—to save the world—but to condemn by far its larger portion. Not Christ coming to set forth the Father, but Christ coming as something to save us from the Father. Not God loving the world, and giving His Son for it, but loving His Son and giving the world for Him: this is but what in general we have seen and heard as Revelation.

And now, when scepticism is acknowledged and complained of, what is done? Is there any intelligent recognition of its cause?—any recognition that false representations of God and Christ are a main cause? Nay, on the contrary, an aggravation of such representations. That which is mainly done, is to harden and establish these great

causes of scepticism, and to increase them more and more. It is evident, in fact, that they who do such things, do not themselves see the light of Revelation, and that they do not value it for that which it is—that they indeed seek to preserve it, but all they see and seek to preserve is that which is unimportant, or relatively objectionable, or that only by which it has been conveyed and came to us. Such seek to preserve that which is the cause of the mischief, and by technical definitions and materialistic rites to show forth and fasten down that truth which otherwise, they think, will fly away. If reasons for faith are asked, instead of reasons, and the reason which is in Revelation, all that generally is offered now by such is the heathen cry, "The image came down from Jupiter. Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

A leading newspaper, indeed, tells us that the object of Revelation is not to affect reason or morals, but to inculcate "Dogma." But if Revelation be (as it is generally accepted to be) a teacher sent from God, to make God known, can we imagine such teaching apart from morals and intelligence? Can we accept God as set forth without such? No such view could find place but on the Ephesian ground that the idol fell from heaven. Accordingly this is the ground generally taken. Enquiry is discouraged, and meaning is not sought. We live in an age when Luther's parrot-like repetition, "Hoc est corpus meum" (without Luther's concomitant light however), finds much acceptance. We ask what it is, what is its meaning, but all the reply we get is

still "Hoc est corpus meum." And "we know no more, we seek not to know." And again, alas, this reply finds acceptance, nay, the courts ring with praise at the propriety of the reply. But, alas, wise men shake their heads, and Christ outside the town is seen returning to be crucified, while no man asks, "Whither goest Thou?" "Domine, quo vadis?" Are we, then, surprised at the scepticism of the day, when such an account is given of Revelation, when such scenes are daily transacted before us, when Revelation is so set forth and conceived of,—when, in all good faith, it is thought that what we have to do, and all we have to do, is, as it is called, to "nail our colours to the mast?" Alas, do such as say this not know, or do they forget, that all that is now asked (and that all that is of use in the "colour") is, to know what the colour is, and what it means; and that a true explanation of its meaning is all that is wanted, and is that which is needed. It is evident from the methods taken to discover and maintain the truths of Revelation by its ministers in many places, that they themselves do not recognise what the great truths of Revelation are, and how they are known and maintained. It is not seen that they are self-evidencing, and maintain themselves. They are thought to be evidenced by other testimony, and maintained by means external to themselves. In such a condition, while valuing Revelation, and considering themselves its defenders, yet having no real knowledge of it, such men are seen (as men at a loss and uncertain ever are) to make up by heat for that which is deficient in light,

and to insist on the imposition of Revelation by authority, instead of leaving it to its own force. These men have partial light, and that in them which prompts them to their action is this, no doubt, within them—it is partial light and knowledge which is the root of their "fond rage." But it is partial; they do not see the meaning; they do not recognise at what it points; they do not see that that they value does not come and cannot stand by the things or in the way which they imagine, and that they by their action are doing more harm than good: this they do not see. Nor do they recognize their uncertainty. But if they saw and believed fully, they would know that there is no means of exalting the truth but by manifestation of the truth, and that nothing but this will preserve it or create its surroundings: but that this will create and sustain them: that these things do not create the truth, that they are created and defended by it. And hence a wrong or transposed position given to that which we call the Church has in consequence gone far to produce the present scepticism as to Revelation. It is largely held (and acted on as if it were true by multitudes) that the Church is the creator of, or the guide to, revealed truth; instead of that the Church is its creature, and dependent on it. And with this theory, the great problem has been to define and find the Church, so that thereby the truth might be infallibly discovered—a definition and search which, notwithstanding manifest and repeated fallacies, still goes on. At this moment more than half Christendom, as we have before said, is engrossed in the search—in an act, that

is, which depends for its value on the truth of the postulate that the Church is the test of truth and guide to Revelation; and that they are the Church. It is both a "verifying" and a creative process. And we ourselves are far from being indisposed to rest the recognition of truth on the result of a "verifying process" or the testimony, that is, of our conscience, or "inner consciousness." For notwithstanding the smile which attends the conception that a camel can by imagination be constructed on this principle, there is no doubt that it was by this principle that the original camel was constructed, that is, by a consideration and adaptation of the means to the ends required. And by some such verifying process, no doubt, the Church can be detected, and then act. What we assert is, that a Church, although found, if standing on such a basis, is herself no test of the presence, or means for the production, of truth: that the Church is the creature of Truth, and not its creator; and truth the guide to her, and not she to it; that she must be tested by the truth, and not the truth by her. For it is manifest that what she teaches must be brought to the bar of human judgment, and that if it does not correspond to the witness of the Divine Monitor within, it has to be rejected. In this way the Church of England sat in judgment on the Churches of Rome, of Antioch, and of Jerusalem. By this means we sit in judgment, every man among us, who belongs to the Church to which he belongs, and to the section of that Church which he prefers, simply because he judges it to be more in accordance with truth than the others; he judges by the

light presented, and by that within himself, and the higher presentation carries the day. Now what we complain of is that, notwithstanding this fact of practical experience, the Church, irrespective of what she teaches, claims to be identical with Revelation in many places, while it is evident (to us at least) that this is far from being the case. Our knowledge that this is not the case, from our knowledge of what Revelation is, has saved us from throwing off Revelation; because we had it, we were able to distinguish it from all its false surroundings; but those who had not this power, from not having the means, being unable to distinguish, have thrown off Revelation because of this identification of it with the Church, with a false Church, that is erected on false premisses. It will be said, But surely the Church is visible, and tested by its visibility? Are not its sacraments visible? No doubt they are. And so far, no doubt, the Church is visible and tested by visible signs. But what we say is that the Truth makes the Church (and the sacraments are dependent on this), and not the Church the truth: and as the truth alone can make a true Church, so apart from the truth we have no Church, and no test whereby to try the Church. Churches which have not the truth are not true Churches: and wherever the truth is held (the truth of Revelation) there the Church is present, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against the truth. But they have assuredly prevailed against many false Churches, and this because they claimed to be the test of truth, and not the truth the test of them, and made the truth dependent

on them, not they on it. And so we have had a Christendom with all manner of abominations, in the name of Christ, instead of a kingdom of purity and peace—a kingdom whose powers were tested by signs which should have been of a precisely opposite character.

It is from the adoption of this theory of the outward being the test of the inward, that those abuses of conduct have come which have separated so many from belief in Revelation. For this outward Church, created and living by ways and means analogous to those of earthly kingdoms, has been the scene of the same evils and scandals as they have been: full of struggles for place and power, trafficking, dressing, ascending thrones by the back of Christ, upsetting thrones in the name of Christ, blessing weapons of destruction "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Surely there must be a fundamentally erroneous conception of Revelation (if that which we deem Revelation be true) in such a case as this. When these parasitic growths are removed, the fair figure of Truth will be seen again, Christ, "the fair Father," in His glory.

The kingdom of heaven is within us, in our Sonship to our Divine Parent is ever present; when latent, it is called out by the Word or Revelation. "My little children," says St. Paul, "of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." That is the test and power of truth, and is in the human heart.

The unconscious infidelity of which we have spoken, which shows itself at this moment in the demand for out-

ward guidance and infallible utterances in ritual, and in the irritability and aversion with which all attempts are regarded which have for their object the harmonization of fact with theory in matters of Religion, shows itself in a very remarkable way in the attitude assumed by those who are in this condition towards the changes in the external form and position of Religion which both doctrinally and materially are now going on. They treat them either with an expression of pitiful regret, or unreasoning indignation, while at the same time they claim that their own action and maintenance of the truth are indispensable. They are sorry, they say, for the world; the truth, of course, is safe, but that they must exert themselves. Yet does not such language show that they do not think that the truth *is* safe, and that they do not know what saves it? Does not such a spirit show that they associate with the preservation of truth, some external arrangements which they think indispensable for it? And does not such conduct show that they do not realise that truth is always safe, if truth itself be adhered to? that truth is bound up with God, and that "He is Governor among the nations," rewarding all according to their works—Churches, states, individuals—pulling down and setting up, just as they require; or, as Positivists would say (and it is the same fact described in other language), that they do not see that an infinite succession of cause and effect is ever going on—like producing like—and that when the producing cause is absent (as we hold to be the case with Churches wherein the truth is lost), no

effect follows; and the outward form ere long disappears. Yet it is such form, and its edification or restoration, which now chiefly occupies the multitude, or that body, at least, which does not recognise that the form is but the shell, and which cries at its shaking or fall, "There is an end of all perfection."

No doubt there is a shaking now going on, but we believe it is that the things which cannot be shaken, those things which are the essentials of all creeds, the things which are true in all creeds, those in which all creeds are one, may stand out and remain. It is to this common ground, perhaps, that we are coming, to this it is that the shaking points. This is the way in which alone we believe unity will be brought about. Unity will not be brought about by demanding that all shall be one: unity will be brought about by seeing that in which all are one, and making a demand for that only. Does this lower the religion of Christ, or Revelation? We think not. Not only shall many come from the East and West, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac in the kingdom of heaven, not only in every nation is he who feareth God and worketh righteousness accepted with Him, but that which gives the kingdom to others with Isaac and Jacob, and acceptance to others not of Israel, is precisely that by which Abraham, Isaac, and the others entered, that which was the basis of Israel, and constituted it. True it is that there is no name given under heaven among men by which they can be saved but that of Christ; yet this

means the same thing, for the basis here is the same also. No one supposes that it is the name of Christ which saves, but that it is having His nature, that which is signified by the name, the recognition, in short, of what God is, that which Christ had, His entrance into the mind and will of God—an entrance which was that which gave Him entrance—that by which he entered into the kingdom, and by which all who enter must likewise enter, and who in so entering, are fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters with Christ Jesus. For the words of St. Augustine still remain true, that "what is now called the Christian religion, has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race, until Christ came in the flesh: from which time the true religion which existed already, began to be called Christian." [August. Retract. 1—13. Quoted by Max Müller.]

In our Record of Revelation, Egypt and Edom are called by God "My sons." The prophets are full of God's revelations to the Gentiles, and St. Paul makes this common revelation the basis of his appeals both to Greece and Rome. And going farther back yet, we can scarcely deny to such a sentence from the Brahman faith as the following, a kindredness of faith and Revelation to our own. Speaking of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, Kalidasa says—

> "In those Three Persons the One God was shown,
> Each First in place, each Last—not one alone;
> Of Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may be
> First, second, third, among the Blessed Three."
> (Max Müller's "Chips from a German Workshop," pref., p. xviii.)

It is probable that the true "*Civitas Dei*," when realized,

will bring face to face many of whom Abraham was ignorant, and whom Israel did not acknowledge, but who, having God equally for their Father, have equal right and welcome to the Father's house. All the advantage of the Jew was that he had had the way to it made more plain, and this, no doubt, was much.

The Revelation in Christ came to make that way plainer still. But we confess that it is not now plain, that much has been done to turn out of the way, and to hide the end, that the Revelation of the nineteenth century is not that of the middle ages—nor *it* that of the Councils—nor *it* that of the Apostles; and that, finally, that only which was done and said by Christ Himself was the true Revelation. (Müller.) It is possible that to this original foundation we are now being driven by the scepticism which is shaking so much; and which some suppose is but making a solitude and calling it peace. But the question will recur, whether that which is being shaken, and disbelieved, is that which should or should not be shaken or disbelieved? We are inclined to think that in the main it is that which ought to be shaken, and not believed. The things which ought to remain and be believed *must* ever remain, and cannot be shaken. We cannot remove them: they are not to be moved by us; our doubts or disbelief are altogether outside of them, and do not touch them; they remain eternally as they are in the nature of things, and from these we must argue and rise to other things, and not from other things to them. The

world, God's Nature, and Providence, these must ever remain eternally the same, and from these we must descend to earthly circumstances, and not rise from earthly circumstances to them. We must found Revelation upon God, and not God on Revelation.

But we have said that things which are being shaken are those which should be shaken, and this assuredly is the case as to those things which have come into the place of the higher truths and of truth itself. Those who have clear views as to which these are, and have made up their minds about them, should be careful that they express their belief about these things. Those who really believe in Revelation upon its own merits, and are safely anchored in the Divinity of Christ, from knowing how Divine He is, and in what the Divine nature consists—that it is not in words but things, and what these are, will be the first to acknowledge their obligation in this respect. But it is evident that, although there may be latent feeling in the matter, there is but little expression of it, when it has come to be the case, in many instances, that the things of which men were most sure, such as the purely spiritual character of Revelation, are allowed to be represented as something else; and not only so, but those who define it to be something else, are allowed to assume the character of apostles of truth, and those who are on the other side are only to be tolerated because of present weakness. This may be seen on every hand. But in no case is it more glaring than in the conduct of the Evangelical party, as it used to be called, towards their

antagonists in the controversies of the last thirty years. These persons — the defenders of what the Evangelical party believe to be mere superstition—are called, and allowed to be called, the defenders of the Faith. The late Bishop of Exeter (the prosecutor in the Gorham case) was lately publicly honoured at a meeting of once Evangelical clergy as a "confessor," and so far as the public are aware, no member of the once earnest and faithful Evangelical party said a word in behalf of the truth—of that, at least, which was the truth to them.

But the reason is not far to seek. Frightened by the inroads which free thought and private judgment have made upon the letter of the records of their belief, and having built too much upon the letter, they have been glad to obtain allies on any terms. But then there is this difference in such conduct. The principles of the other allow and demand their conclusions; theirs do not allow and ought to prevent them. And what is the practical consequence? That clergy perform services in church, the results of which they do not believe to be those they profess—their senses, their experience, entirely forbidding it. They then feel themselves humbled, and the flock, so far as it is intelligent and conscientious, proceed from doubt to disbelief.

It will be said there is but a choice of two evils, and what are we to do? To submit to what is the law, or to resign connection with the Establishment? There is yet another course. It is to have the law altered, and in the

meantime to comply with it under protest. It is time this were looked to, if belief and the integrity of the Church of England are to be saved. Of course all allowance must be made for the extreme difficulty of drawing up a general service which shall express a definite belief, which shall offer up a prayer, for example, and not take for granted that it is to be, or is fulfilled. But it is not impossible; anything, at any rate, is better than that which violates immediate belief, and can only be admitted by roundabout and far-fetched reasons, and which has the additional and more serious result of encouraging a whole class of errors, which have done more than anything else to sap the foundations and pervert the history of Christianity, and change it from a pure and free exhibition and choice of a better and truer way, into a debased and obligatory reception of something which is worse, as being based on unreality and untruthfulness.

There are four or five great hindrances which impede action in this matter, and which should be carefully weighed, and, if possible, removed by those who recognise these drawbacks among ourselves, as producing causes for the growing unbelief in Revelation. The first, arising from indifference to such questions among the clergy; the second, from that blind conservatism which believes that if one thing is moved all the structure will tumble down: and again, that good conservatism which, finding the blessings of things as they are, would think any disturbance a positive evil; and then that use of Revelation, which we may call

conventional, which does not go beyond the outward words, and seeks not, or has no interest in, the discovery and experience of the farther or true meaning: and finally, the feeling of that class which thinks there is no meaning beyond that they have already attained, and this the meaning which comes alone, and is given, by authority.

But unbelief in God is not to be regarded as a blameless condition. Our Lord and the Apostles, indeed, while expressing surprise, do not so much blame as pity. But, doubtless, it is a culpable as well as a sad state. That we have ground sufficient for belief, and reason or obligation to believe, St. Paul, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, plainly shows; and in his discourse with the Greeks on the Areopagus, says the same thing—treating, however, the case in a milder way with them. But when we consider the question, and see that so much of the present infidelity is caused among continental nations by that which has been given to them as God being so little of God, or that among ourselves artificial theologies, catechetical dealings, and professional aspects have had much of the same effect, we shall, I think, be more inclined to pity than to blame. And, at this moment, it is the thoughtful and the religious—men who would believe if they could—who are most in doubt as to the being and characteristics of God. Let us, then, look at the matter with tenderness, for unless we do so, we shall be of no manner of use to those whom we aspire to serve. Let us endeavour to put ourselves into their place. It is

strange, if we think of it, how much unrecognised infidelity there is among the highest and most pious. Such books as our best bishops and others have written—the "Analogy," Paley's and Leslie's "Evidences," and such like—all derive their best arguments from the spring of scepticism within the writers. And the intemperate and external pressure sought (as we have said) to be placed upon belief are evidences of its present extent, even among those who do not suspect it as being in themselves. But, in dealing with the subject, we should keep in mind that there are two different kinds and classes of belief, with their corresponding unbeliefs, to be recognised: the first, that class which takes things for granted, and believes without inquiry or experience; the second, or other, which connects belief with inquiry and experimental knowledge.

In the first class are children, and that order of mind gifted with natural piety and reverence, more than with reason; in the second, those who attain to belief by inquiry, and have come to it by the path of inquiry and, it may be, of tribulation. With the first we shall not much concern ourselves, as it is not needful here to do so; for the others, however, we shall propose a few considerations, which, as they have been helpful to some, may be to others, particularly to that large and increasing class with whom the progress of science and the filling up of nature with materialistic cause and effect, goes far not only to exclude the necessity for the being of God, but even *room* for His existence.

Recognising the scientific difficulty in its fulness, it appears to us that those who feel this difficulty ignore the fact that there may be—nay, must be—worlds beyond those to which their present senses and powers give access. There is much analogous to this observed already in other things. Many, for example, have no musical ear; to many, besides Peter Bell—

> "A primrose by the river brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him,"

but beyond it is no more, outside of it there is nothing. Such an one says, as the sun rises, "I see something like a golden guinea coming out of the sea;" another (as Blake the painter), "I see, and hear likewise, an innumerable company of angels praising God." The first says, "I cannot see God for nature;" the other, "I cannot see nature for God." It is the soul and body; and both must grow together until the harvest. The world of suggestive fancy, poetry, may be all unknown and unrecognised; yet these are all equally as true, if not truer, worlds. The thoughts it suggests, "too deep for tears," are true thoughts. Babbage's calculating-machine, so far as it goes, is perfect, but it does not go far; and the worlds of imagination, of which it takes no account, are yet as real as its world, and probably higher. There may be not only five, but five hundred, senses for all we know; and if we say we must go by those we know, it does not follow that by them we can deny that of which they have no cognisance, but which yet may be. It is not, however, by the senses that we can discover God at all;

the senses are only means whereby great realities which they indicate are conveyed to us. They are not these themselves; these are independent of and above them. But by them that is indicated of which but for them we should not know. Yet that which they indicate is not congruous with them, and cannot be indicated by them in the sense of being seen or heard or smelt. It is hard to divide between the two. We feel it is hard; and yet it is self-evident that, in the case of God, the senses cannot be identified with that which they indicate. Such indication is that, however, which we seek, and which, although our higher reason and spiritual instincts tell us would not give us God, is that which we seek after, and which, if we had, we unwittingly think would ensure belief; we think that, in short, seeing is believing, and that if we saw, we should believe in God. Now, apart from the whole tone of Revelation as to miracles, the implied reproof of our Lord to Thomas, His apologetic words ere raising Lazarus, "because of them that stand by I said it," His description of the fulness of time and perfection producing a state of rest and belief, of which the terms are, "in that day ye shall ask me nothing," implying that we shall not be guided by the eye, but by our knowledge of God, and the whole apostolic language in connection with signs and wonders;—it is evident that the Lord's words are literally fulfilled constantly, when He says, for example, so often, "Ye have eyes, but see not, and ears, but hear not;" and that "if they believed not Moses and the prophets, they would not have believed had one risen

from the dead." In other words, were "open vision" possible, open vision would not do that which we suppose it would. It did not before, it would not now; a thousand reasons would arise to do away with the reality and result naturally to be expected. But beside that, God or the nature of God cannot be the subject of vision. And although it is difficult to say, when we see the strange blending in ourselves of mind and matter, and the effect—say of motion—which our own mind has on our bodies, that God could not so affect matter as to leave us under the conviction it was none else but He who did it; yet it is a question whether in the ultimate result we should attribute the force to aught else but some hidden, and as yet undiscovered, or material power. And do we not do so already? The laws of nature, as laws, are wholly benevolent; they subserve benevolent and moral purposes; they have their end and origin in these. But moral purposes evince an origin beyond themselves; and although it is difficult to know, and still more so to define, what is meant by a person, these laws are significant of a person; at least, we have never found, and cannot imagine, morals apart from such a source. Love itself if looked on but as a magnetic force (of which hate is the opposite pole), yet in the objects it embraces does evince an origin and end beyond its own immediate action—one original personal origin, in short. This, then, we believe is God. And it is probable that most who think much of it will conclude the same. Yet, although everywhere present and observ-

able, in this sense, is the conclusion always or often drawn, that God is always present with us? Assuredly not, in any real or vital sense. But we expect response of some sort. It is natural. We sit and judge. We ask ourselves and nature questions. Am I above or below that nature which I judge? Am I but a small spoke in the great wheel, emerging for a moment to be again swept into darkness—swept round by the infinite chain of cause and effect; that eternal chain "which having been will never cease to be?" Am I alone—the uppermost—none above me, making myself? No father—no son? So much greater than this material universe, that I can sit and judge and calculate, and, to some extent, affect its movements; and yet so much less as, while speaking, to be swept away by it? Did it, unconscious, give birth to me, conscious? Did those mighty but unsentient wheels which are ever daily more and more evolving themselves and unveiling the dark places, wheels which are wound up to run for ages, it may be for ever, and from whose evolutions emerge the millions of living creatures —are these wheels *their* true parents, the lower of the higher, the unconscious of the conscious? Am I a Frankenstein, the result and product of material and chemical affinities, walking in a darkness we call life? Are all these laws, beings, masses, ALL that there is—no bridge to span, no element to connect them? If so, then I am greater than all, for I can connect them, judge them, think of them. I am, then, greater than the universe! Is there not, however, greater than I? conscious of me as I am conscious of

them, conscious of all, in all, through all, over all, causing, sustaining, changing? It is more than probable; it is self-evident. But He is not self-evident; it is, but He is not. How, then, to find Him? Men (says an apostle) "might feel after Him and find Him," although "He is not far from any one of us." And again, "Not as if I had already apprehended or were already perfect." Here is the clue; it is in morals. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. But, again, what are morals? No doubt that which, as it is the cause, so is it the fulfilling of law—Love. And, doubtless, when I reach Love, I see how and why the worlds were made; and that they were made—made out of things which do not appear—out, in short, of God. Is He, then, one with the world, as a child is with its parent, not less, not more, but similarly? We are taught of God by lower things, and by lower also of God. Starting from this, I come upon Revelation. It reveals what I seek, to which I had got the key but not the manifestation. I have got in Christ the manifestation, the kind of love which is in God, the true condition in which we are. He was a man of sorrows. Is such a thing possible with God? We are sinners. Can such be in the domains of the All-perfect? We must look on facts; and if men are as they are, God must be as He is, as Christ manifests Him. Why, then, did He make us? It is, indeed, a great question. But bliss preponderates: "For the joy set before Him," and us. That it must be as it is, we cannot doubt; that it is no mere introduction of an higher life in Christ,

but the restoration of (perhaps inevitable) fall, is plain. All sin is fall. And who will say there is no sin?

But the venture having been made and the price paid, the work goes on in conformity with the Eternal Laws, and, as we believe, to the consummation and restoration, the final glory and stability of all things, that God in all and by all may be glorified, as seen in Jesus Christ, the key to, and the law of, the Scriptures, of evil, and of doubt—a key which must be used, a use which implies inquiry, trial, discrimination, proving.

We need not seek a personal God in the outward world. And this because He is not in the element of the mechanical or physical world, so as to be consciously encountered there. We must seek Him in another element, if we would personally meet with Him, that is in morals and the affections. Now, in this element, Prayer is the highest level, and by it we attain most directly to Him who is the Most High; to the consciousness of His presence, and realization of what He is.

Our great example and Lord and Saviour, Christ Himself, is nowhere a greater example and guide than in this. And if He (being what he was) required and used prayer night and day, to keep Him in the knowledge and unity of God (He being on one side God—God and Lord Himself), what are we, to try to live with or find God without this, or elsewhere? How are we to live and find Him in a different medium from that used by the Divine Son Himself? "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee," He says; and why? Because

it does not seek where alone it can find. The world complains (at present) that it does not know and cannot find God. It says He is not, because it sees Him not; but it does not look where He is to be found. Did it search so as to find, it would find; and find also that thus it should be; that it is needful and better that God should not be known by the wise and prudent, but be revealed to babes; that is, that nothing should he required to find the Father but the spirit of a child, that spirit which it is self-evident can be the sole condition of a conscious blessedness with God throughout the ages of eternity. And as to prayer itself, can we not see as we rise from the lower to the higher animals, and from the lower to the higher forms of the human mind of man, how the development is ever in the disengagement of prayer, and a rise with the character in the form of prayer? Prayer and its character is the highest and surest test, not only of what we are, but the greatest proof that what we seek exists. Who can read—who can use the Psalms of David, without at once feeling that he has got into a region higher than his own, and that this region is the region of the Most High—that there is a Highest, and that He is there. There is nothing more wonderful than the Psalms, nothing throughout the volume we call "God's Word" more evidential of God's Being; nothing more significant of its being the Word of God, that there is a God, and that this is His Word; for if the Word of God is not God's Word, may we not ask then, Whose Word *can* it be? From it we climb to Him! From Him we descend to it.

In the mode of dealing with doubt and unbelief, so much wisdom and knowledge are contained in the words of Mr. Hutton at the Church Congress last October at Birmingham, that we cannot do better than to quote them. Such words, we think, deserve a better fate than merely to appear and disappear with the ephemeral records of the day. We therefore append them here with the consent, we trust, of their author, and the approval of those who read them. Mr. Hutton says:—

"What Pascal has said of the sceptics and scepticisms of his time, as if it were true for all time, must, I think, be very gravely qualified indeed as regards English scepticism of the present day. 'As it is the purpose of God,' he wrote 'to be visible to those who search for Him with all their hearts, and concealed from those who are disposed to shun Him, He so orders his communications with mankind that the signs of them are plain to those who seek Him, and obscure to those who do not seek Him;' which is really equivalent, of course, to this—that those who have not found, have never earnestly sought God. Can any man who is really familiar with the high sceptical literature of modern England—of course I do not mean the scoffing scepticism, but the conscientious, truth-seeking scepticism, —or who is familiar with the difficulties avowed by the learned and cultivated laity in their most earnest moods, deliberately subscribe to this? For my own part, at least, I must say that I have not found it so; that a great deal of what seems to me to have been the most persistent and

earnest—I might almost say *passionate*—seeking after God of recent years, has not visibly, and to human eyes, ended in this life in what I should call finding Him; that the signs of Him have often been obscure to those who seek, and sometimes even plain to those who shun Him; that He has remained invisible to some who have searched with all their hearts, and now and then at least has been discerned by those who might have preferred to disbelieve, had it been possible. I am sure that any assumption, such as Pascal's—even if it were ever absolutely true of any age—would, with respect to the deepest forces of modern doubt, be utterly unjust, as well as fatal to any chance we might have of convincing men who are haunted by them. One whose intellect was among the subtlest and finest, and whose heart was among the noblest of our generation, after giving a great part of many of the best years of his life to studying the theological problems of the day, deliberately rested in this conclusion, that

> . . . . 'It seems God's newer will
> We should not think at all of Him, but turn
> And of the world that He has given us make
> What best we can.'

And that, or something like that,—a belief that no clear certainty as to revelation is attainable, that the historic and critical evidence is inadequate, and to some extent inconsistent with itself;—that modern science, if it does not absolutely invalidate, yet creates a considerable presumption against the Divine use of miracle;—finally, that the truest moral and religious spirit is in these latter days less and

less expressed in direct and conscious worship, and more and more in the indirect form of devotion to the task of purifying the world,—seems to me to be the conclusion of some of the noblest and purest and most powerful, though also most sceptical minds of the day. In saying this, I am, of course, merely describing what seems to me a matter of fact and observation,—a matter of fact and observation which very naturally causes most of us much pain and at times great bewilderment, but which seems only the more certain that one is obliged to recognise it, in spite of that pain and that bewilderment. I think that to those of us who believe profoundly in the Divine government of all spiritual natures, *i.e.*, of all natures willing and eager to submit to God's government, even though *they* do not recognise it as we do as being God's, the fact I have mentioned involves no less a conclusion than this,—that the fine network of doubts and difficulties which have occupied so important a place in the religious history of our time, are themselves instruments of God, intended by Him to effect a great temporary work, and are *not* merely temptations to be overcome—infidelities to be resisted. Indeed, the sort of holy horror of these genuine intellectual difficulties in the way of faith, which has been, and still is, so common, seems to me a great mischief to the Christian Church, and also wholly without warrant in the New Testament. In the New Testament, indeed, there is plenty of censure of those who fear to come to the light 'because their deeds are evil;' of those who, 'when they knew God, glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful,

but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened;'—censure, in a word, of all *moral* recoil from God; but there is no censure anywhere that I can find for those who are genuinely bewildered by what they think the discrepancies of evidence, and who *cannot* draw the conclusion their hearts make them desire to draw. The Apostle Thomas appears to have been of this class. That his heart was close to his Lord's the eagerness with which he led the way in entreaty to the other disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with Him,' seems to prove. But he *could* not believe in the fact of the Resurrection, in which he longed to believe. And he is not, as far as I can see, even *tacitly* reproached. Our Lord says, it is true, 'Blessed' (or happy) 'are they who have *not* seen and *yet* have believed;' but he uses the very same word to describe the blessedness or happiness of those 'who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,' which certainly is not a matter within their own power,—and I do not know that the one is more a matter within our own power than the other. Undoubtedly it is a great source of unhappiness when the intellectual constitution is a bar and check upon the spiritual life. Those are far *happier* whose natures move harmoniously, conviction following easily the spiritual impulses of the soul. But it is not always the happiest natures that *do* the most of God's *work* in the world, though it may be the happiest natures which have most of God's being in them; and for my own part, I cannot doubt that all the genuine hesitations, difficulties, incredulities of high, disinterested, and truth-loving

minds are parts of God's direct teaching to us of to-day, and are likely to do a great work in purifying our Christianity. And I believe that unless we approach as genuine fellow-workers those who, in spite of their scepticisms, recommend themselves to us, by a deeper than intellectual judgment, as devoted seekers after Truth, we shall not only lose all chance of gaining them over to us on earth,—which I dare say in some cases is not often very great,—but a much better chance of ourselves profiting by their difficulties, of sifting out from our own faith the baser metal which it contains. By the more reverent and sympathetic mode of treating doubt, even if we do not succeed in convincing those on whom certain great difficulties have, as it were, seized with a hunting force that they have merely lost themselves in a labyrinth which, properly treated, leads to faith,—yet by weighing and shifting and appreciating those difficulties fairly, we shall be led to leave out much, and perhaps put in more, in our own mode of presenting the grounds of faith that will greatly alter its relations to external thought. And I think it may be shown that we shall in this way adapt our intellectual view of Christianity much better to win the minds of the new generation; that we shall enable it to estimate more truly the *relative* worth of these difficulties for the future, and to avoid the danger of exaggerating them.

"I will give two illustrations of what I mean from the departments of modern inquiry which are at present, I imagine, most full of those difficulties which hinder faith in minds *morally* attracted towards Christ—first, as regards

faith in God; then, as regards faith in Christ. (1) The speculations of Mr. Darwin on natural history are, I think, amongst the most powerful of the modern causes which alienate earnest minds not simply from faith in Christ, but from faith in God — and the result has been that Christians have felt a very natural desire, and in some cases almost a spiritual obligation to discredit and overthrow even the solid substratum of fact on which those speculations are certainly based. Mr. Darwin's theory has *looked* to many like an attempt to account for creation and the richness of creation without assuming either a Divine purpose or a divine will; and to either a Christian or a Theist no attempt could be more painful. Yet I think that the way in which the greatest of modern naturalists has too often been met by theologians has done far more to give a false impression of the weakness of theology, and to lend an impulse of factitious popularity to the fancied atheism of the theory, than to throw doubt upon a genuinely-scientific *method*, however extravagantly it may have been used. When we hear of popular representatives in the Austrian Parliament loudly avowing themselves Darwinians, as the most telling mode of insulting the priesthood, we may be quite sure that the error lies not so much with the naturalists as with their theological opponents. And though our theologians in England have not quite so much to answer for, I believe that their attitude towards one of the great physiological discoveries of the day has, on the whole, shown a serious want of faith in the

depth and strength of their own position. However wide Mr. Darwin's facts may be, and no doubt are, of supplying any general hypothesis as to the Origin of species, surely they do prove as much as this, that one of the great formative principles in the animal world, which vitally modifies and improves species, is the competitive principle, "the struggle for existence," amongst individuals of the same race, or amongst different races which either feed on the same food or are fed upon by the same predatory tribes;—that this active and often furious competition tends to the accumulation in each race of all those peculiarities and properties favourable to success in gaining food and in avoiding danger, and to the gradual weeding-out of all those individuals and races under great relative *disadvantages* for either of these functions. The hawk with the wing best adapted for soaring and hovering finds its prey more easily than one with a shorter and weaker pinion; it feeds its little ones more easily; its brood prospers better; more hawks with these favourable peculiarities survive, and so in the end the type of the whole species is moulded so as to adapt it best for its predatory habits. On the other hand, the little birds on which it feeds will develop in like manner the qualities best adapted for avoiding its pursuit, through the more rapid destruction of those species and individuals less qualified for escape. Now, I can quite understand and sympathize with the superficial dread of a theory of this kind, which seems at first sight in but imperfect agreement with our Lord's

teaching as to the special providence of every event in the animal no less than in the human world,—'Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father.' But is it more than seeming? Mr. Darwin, we must remember, has not discovered the *facts*, only a new and general result of the facts. The birds fall to the ground,—the naturalist would say,—because its habits exposed it to the beak or the gun of the destroyer,—because it was not swift enough, or not wary enough, or not insignificant enough, or not like enough in colour to the ground over which it was skimming to escape. The bird falls to the ground, says our Lord, because God wills it. If, then, we combine our Lord's saying and the naturalist's observations, they come to this,—that the Father of all gives the swift beak and strong wing to the hawk that he may the more easily prevail, and by prevailing modify the organizations of the whole tribe in future; that He gives the bird of slow flight and too conspicuous plumage and unwary ways over to destruction, in order that the species may be so modified as to favour swifter flight and less conspicuous plumage and warier ways in future, and that He himself decrees this constant competition between the gifts by which the fugitives escape destruction, and the pursuers inflict it. Well, that is, after all, not very different from the teaching of the Psalmist, 'The young lions roar after their prey: *they seek their meat from God.*' But what I want to insist on is this, that the whole point and drift of Mr. Darwin's facts do not consist in any new stress on the superficially cruel competition in nature,—all that was

familiar hundreds of years before,—but only in this, that the effect of this competition is to *perfect* gradually the organization of each tribe of animals for its own peculiar purpose—to make the hawks finer hawks, better adapted for preying,—to make the various tribes which constitute the prey of the hawks better adapted to escape them,—in a word, to mould to the highest perfection the physical peculiarities which enable each tribe to live, so that as the world goes on, swifter and nobler hawks pursue swifter or warier or less easily detected tribes of inferior birds. Now, surely, so far as this theory goes, it not only does not increase any *moral* difficulty in the apparently cruel competition of nature; but it does, so far as it goes, make clearer the intellectual purpose at work in creation, when we see that physical progress, from less to more perfect organizations, is a part of the very law of the lowest animal life. It may be said, 'That is precisely the thing we dread. A *natural* explanation of the gradual improvement of physical organization seems to supersede God. If you weed out the poorer specimens of each organization by natural means, it seems to imply that growth in perfection is not due to God, who could easily make the organization perfect at once.' Now, I think that if we face that question fairly, we shall find that faith owes much to Mr. Darwin for putting it, instead of having any reason to discredit his facts and inveigh against any reasonable inferences from these facts. In nature, progress begins, he asserts, by physical improvement attained through the sharpest process of weeding-out weak specimens, and

leaving only the more capable specimens of any type. Suppose we grant it. How, then, did nature, with this for its great principle, attain to the law of pity and sympathy for weakness, the law of self-sacrifice, the law of Christ? Is it not obvious that the more clearly Mr. Darwin shows that improvements in physiological organization are attained through close competition, the more certainly he proves to us that human nature in its highest form, the Christian nature, has some other and very different root from physiological law, and that the charity, pity, and self-sacrifice for inferiors which is of the essence of the Gospel of the Cross, is *no* development of that law which governs physiological progress, and also the production and distribution of human wealth? But the Christian revelation, which teaches that the spiritual is Lord of the Natural, that the natural, though proceeding from God, contains no picture of God's mind, but only of such of His purposes as are preliminary to the revelation of His mind,—is infinitely strengthened instead of weakened by the discovery that there is nothing in the lower world below man which could possibly be developed into that noblest and most characteristic of human sympathies which reverses the law of physiological, and not less the law of political economy, and makes our highest glory to consist, not in the succumbing of the weak to the strong, but in the self-sacrifice of the strong for the weak. In a word, grant Mr. Darwin's principle as the secret of physiological progress, and you establish that the lower is not the root of the higher, that the law of animal life and of selfish competition

for wealth is not the core of that law of moral progress which has steadily tended to check and transform the physical competitions of the lower universe by the nobler competitions of Divine self-sacrifice. In other words, the supernatural is not a development of the natural, since the supernatural comes in to enrich the natural by conquering, subordinating, transforming it. I take this, of course, simply as one illustration of the view, that if we welcomed every new discovery in science instead of starting back in alarm, we should often find new weapons for faith, instead of a new stimulus for doubt.

"(2) As to Christianity. The greatest difficulty, I fancy, which besets the most cultivated sceptics of the day is something of this kind:—The Apostles and their contemporaries, it is said, had no real knowledge of the scientific improbability, or the critical difficulties in the way of much of what they believed. What we call 'the laws of nature' were unknown to them: criticism, as we have learnt it, was alien to them. When St. Paul said, that the bare grain which men sow is not that body which shall be, but that God giveth it a body 'as it pleaseth Him,' he never dreamt that organic chemistry could prove that this body must be subtracted from the earth and air in which the seed is placed. The Apostles had no idea of the strict conditions which God's creative will has prescribed for itself. They represented the Divine volition as much freer to mould nature than God has permitted Himself to let it be. Thus they had no conception of the *a priori* difficulty of a miracle, of the principles of the conservation of matter

and force which such a miracle as the multiplication of the loaves and fishes would seem to violate. Critically, too, the early Church had no knowledge of the suspicion with which the works pretending to the authority of great names ought to be treated. The Gospel of St. John was accepted without any of that minute investigation which we in our day should be compelled to apply to a Gospel diverging so much from the earlier accounts. In a word, had we lived then, we should have felt a hundred difficulties, and applied a hundred tests of truth, of the mere existence of which the Apostles did not so much as know. Just as we should not accept a statement as to any incredible intensity of cold made by men who lived before thermometers were discovered, so we ought not to accept evidence of deviations from all known laws offered by men, in whatever good faith, and however intensely we might desire to believe it, who lived before scientific and historic criticism had begun to exist.

"If, instead of merely condemning this attitude of mind as sinful, we would appreciate it fairly, it would, I think, teach us a good deal as to the true mode of presenting our faith to the world. It has been too much the custom to go far beyond the Apostles on the historical and miraculous side of our Christian evidence, while falling far short of their position in other respects. I think it is true that the Apostles did not in the least enter into the *a priori* difficulties which we see in miracle, and that as ordinary witnesses of mere physical marvels their testimony should not be received as of the highest weight. But then, on the

other hand, they did not build on mere miracle at all, as we should do, and as our writers on Christian evidence have done, supposing it proved. It is a very remarkable thing that, in spite of the miracles of which the Gospel narrative tells us, the Apostles were never finally convinced that their Lord was *above* Nature till they had conversed with Him after His resurrection. The miracles of which we read in His life had little apparent part even in the Gospel they then preached—no such part as they would have had with any witnesses who had applied to them scientific tests. What finally convinced them, hoping and hesitating before that their Lord was above Nature, and that they might trust implicitly all He told them of His life in God, was His passage through death and His victory over it. Of this they regarded themselves as the witnesses, and all the supernatural in His previous life fell into the shade beside it. St. Paul probably knew not one-tenth part of the details which we read in the Gospels. Even St. Peter alludes only to the transfiguration in addition to the death and resurrection of his Master. The notion of canvassing minutely the historical details of Christ's life was quite foreign to the Apostles. They must have heard all sorts of variations in the incidental touches, or they could hardly have handed down to us accounts so different. Yet it certainly never occurred to them that the sifting and arranging of minute historical coincidences and confirmations would be desirable. They rested absolutely on two points, the image of a character higher than nature—a character impressed upon their hearts—a character whose

inner movements were not determined by the mortal accidents of life, a character which was as serene in the fierce conflict of the elements as amidst the violence of a cruel mob—and on the external confirmation of this image given by the fact that their Lord had passed through death, and was the same after as before the great mortal change. Now, surely, of these two facts they were competent witnesses. No scientific incredulity of miracle would have made them more incredulous of the Resurrection than, from quite other causes, they certainly were. No fact in history is more certain than that they believed themselves to have held repeated conversations with their risen Lord, and this, too, in large groups, and that their whole future life was determined by those conversations. And the less scientific they were, the less they knew what future ages would expect from the spiritual and moral character of One standing out thus above nature. Yet, that the character *was* such as to be in keeping with this superiority of the law of natural phenomena, we know by the image left in their traditions—an image far beyond their power to *con*ceive had they not *per*ceived it, and which is only the more remarkable that the details out of which we gather it were left floating carelessly with no historical superintendence on the mind of that generation. I think we may fairly thank the sceptics for pointing out to us how widely we have shifted the point of view of the Apostles in our recasts of Christian evidence. Did Christ overcome death? Was He spiritually and morally as much above nature as He thereby proved Himself to be naturally? These are questions, surely, on which

the Apostles have shown themselves to be competent witnesses. Why deny that beyond the answer to these questions the historical detail is such as we ought to expect from the tradition of an unscientific age—that it is uncritically arranged and, taken alone, would have been insufficient to have proved the existence of the physically supernatural, had it not been proved for us by the Resurrection? I think it has been the attempt to put ourselves on ground a great deal *surer* than that of the Apostles which has produced so much doubt. If the earnest sceptics should lead us back to the ground taken by the Apostles—trust in the account of Himself and His own nature given by One who transfigured life and conquered death, they will, I think, have done us a great service. For me, I confess that study of the best modern sceptics has brought me, on the whole, more faith than the study of the best modern apologists."

We entirely agree with Mr. Hutton, and consider his observation as to the chart not indicating the mind of the Captain until we know the port, a point of extreme value. But we know the port—know it from knowing what the Captain necessarily must be. But, alas! men often talk most of what they know least; and, however glibly the name slips off their tongue, do those who say most and insist most know God best? God cannot be known but by being known, and how can that be? By a sight, by an apparition, by a creed? If the creed is true, understood, felt—Yea. But this can only be by experience, by the experience of life. God cannot be known, God

cannot reveal Himself but by degrees,—but by giving us the experience of His character, by our knowing what He is from what He does. But, it is said, He holds Himself aloof; we cannot find Him. Is it so? Do we not find Him? Let us not look at the exceptional cases of His government—stories in newspapers, hospitals, prisons—let us rise some miles above the earth, and look down. Is not the whole plan beauteous and fair? Look up, more so still! world upon world, alive, brilliant! To be sure we hear the ants talking as they walk over the musical snuff-box, pointing out its wheels, hearing its melody, and telling one another it is the result of the teeth striking against the comb, that the spring moves the teeth; and there is no more. But is there not? They saw it not wound up; they know not what gives power to the spring. "It is force," they say. But what is force? There was a winding up in the night, a force gave force. Let us be patient. God reveals Himself, as He can only be revealed, to him who seeks, to the patient watcher, to the seeker after God. But at last the blind will find Him. He who in the pastures of the world at last finds that the enclosures are not hindrances but helps, at last finds God in His government, the person in the providence of God; he comes to know Him as He is from what He does: by the experience of that which is. He who feels his life pressed on, and altered to the Divine, by conscience accusing and excusing, until he is brought into unison with the Most High, knows at last what God is, and that He is. What, then, shall we say of those who take away the keys of knowledge, by saying we can only know

God on authority, by outward word and proof? Surely that they have not known God. To what melancholy results this principle leads we can see at this moment in the tragic comedy of Rome, where God is supposed to be given by the pressure of Prelates giving their voice to one! God is not so found or known. He who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God. He only knows, and can know, God. Love alone knows God, and can make Him known. Love only can know Him, and he who loves knows that it is so: he knows that he knows God; yea, he knoweth all things by this unction. He knows why and how the worlds were made; why things are as they are, and that they can be no otherwise, and he knows that which they shall be.

"Oh righteous Father," says the Son, "the world hath not known Thee." He said this in the face of His own sorrow, agony, and death. True He adds—"Take this cup from me;" yet also "Nevertheless not my will but Thine be done." He knew the evil to be good. But *He* knew and did this because He was the Son—because He was Divine. All of us will say this. But alas! how many call Him Divine without knowing in what His Divinity consists, or how Divine He was. Surely He was Divine because of what He was—because of this Divine nature in Him. And what this was we know: by this He was Divine, and of one nature with the Father, and one with the Father. This it is to be Divine, and Divine by its own right: Divine for us likewise; Divine and eternal life: for it is eternal life to know God as God. May we keep ourselves from idolatry, and from that of words! For as we see, and what we see,

so is our rest. "In that day," says Jesus (when ye truly know me), "ye shall ask me nothing." Why? Because then, by knowing, we shall know that He doeth all things well; that God is no less good than mighty; that the might is the servant of the good; that the government is good, that God's laws reflect and lead us to Himself, that even in the end of experimental perfection, if we look to God's commandments, we shall find for our feet room, yea, "room exceeding broad."

Truly our hope is in that which God is; in God's being beyond and independent of us, unseen, yet present and at work. Were it not so, how sad our state! A headache, an environment of bustle, a little trial, and where are we? Experimentally, without God. Still, is He destroyed by our want of consciousness? Do we make God by our brains? The Eternal is not dependent on us. He is, happily, and is what He is, independent of us eternally, but the telescope is needed by us to bring Him nigh. This does not make Him, but it gives Him to us. But as He made the stars He made the telescope also. Our capacities are both a pledge and prophecy. Let us wait in patience: it is a time of education. Were open vision possible, we ought not to desire it; were no law to be violated by God's revealing Himself personally, yet we should not ask this: we should rest on that which is. Knowing that it is ruled by that which He is, we should rest in the patience of hope and the peace of love. How could God have made things other than they are, if this is to be, as it only can in any high sense be, a creation worthy of Him, a world of moral

beings with power to choose? And here He has met man in his need, with the sacrifice of Himself.

Let us have patience. If it takes thousands of years to produce a fragment of red-sandstone, how much must it take for the perfection of an immortal soul! Let us have patience. We are here at school under tutors and governors, under the elements of this world, under the grammars and dictionaries, the gerunds and supines—which are the elements of the next, but of which we see here neither the full meaning nor have the realization of it. Life is an education. Let us have patience; in due season we shall reap if we faint not. We are now sowing our seed, and preparing for the crop which shall be—putting, it may seem at times, lost money into the earth; prayer after prayer, act after act, faith upon faith; but they are not lost. One day the crop will appear suddenly; if not externally, yet within ourselves, and the meaning of our lives be seen. Christ will appear, as the wonderful result of that which we have been and been doing, and we shall find "the ocean to the river of our lives;" we shall see Him as He is, because we shall be like Him as He is. God shall appear; no word, no "open vision," but in His blessed being as the outcome of our sowing, waiting, working; no "open vision," but a blessed reality—so blessed as not to be capable of being the object of vision; greater than eyes have seen, or ears heard, or than it has now entered into the heart of man to conceive. Yet even now God hath revealed this unto us, in part, by His Spirit. The veil is at times much lifted, and the light is seen. We have not yet apprehended in full, but we see in

part, and that which we do see is of the real substance. Now we see through a glass darkly: but we see; the elements of true vision, yea, the true object itself of vision is with us in these elements. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity," and in the last there is the thing itself; for Love is not only the fulfilling, but the substance of the law, its end and origin; that is God.

Let us have patience, and rest on the necessary truths which even ordinary nature brings before all men. We are the children of a day, the ephemera coming into light for a day on the surface of a planet whose relative size to its sun is as the head of a pin to a globe of more than two feet in diameter: itself much less than thousands of other such orbs as stud the universe. We say, "We cannot find God, or the substance of the good or true; to us it is as if it were not." Is such a little thing capable of conceiving of a greater thing than exists? Have we such divinity in ourselves as to be beyond all that is or has been before? Incredible. Call it by what name we will, fall or imperfection, surely it is from the defect, and we believe a culpable defect, within ourselves, that we do not see what must be around us, a Light and Love which is beyond the brightness of "setting suns" and the warmest pulses of a mother's heart—which is around and within us, no doubt, and which, if the darkness do not comprehend, it ought to comprehend it.

THE END.

PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., CITY ROAD, LONDON.

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY

WORDS FOR THINGS

PREFACE.

THE error of "mistaking words for things" is nowhere more common than in religion. Too often we are in the condition of the Tartars mentioned by M. Huc: "If the Lama doctor happens not to have any medicine with him, he is by no means disconcerted: he writes the names of the remedies upon little scraps of paper, moistens the paper with his saliva, and rolls them up into pills, which the patient tosses down with the same perfect confidence as though they were genuine medicaments. To swallow the name of a remedy, or the remedy itself, say the Tartars, comes to precisely the same thing." Alas! who has not heard the words of a creed recited among ourselves in a similar spirit, while at the same time it will be conceded probably that the benefit to the reciter arises from the realization of that which the

words do mean! And too often this ignorance or carelessness culminates at last in the adoption of a meaning which is not the original or the true. It is the object of the following paper to point out, and to endeavour to show some of the most common of these errors among ourselves, and to endeavour to provide a remedy for them. It is the work of a clergyman of much ministerial experience in England.

There is a false use of words, too, among ourselves, and at this moment very common, against which we should be on our guard; as it is one whereby much evil may be done by deterring many from the search for truth; that, namely, whereby through an injurious use of terms the effect is produced alluded to in that verse of Scripture, where it is said, "They would not receive Him because His face were as if He would go to Jerusalem." The words Romanist and Rationalist, for example, are at present injuriously used—the first with the effect of deterring from religious feeling; the second from the use of reason in Religion. Both words assuredly represent erroneous views of Revelation: but we must be careful lest by their indiscriminate use, and their injurious application to others, we do not deter the earnest and anxious inquirer from the search after God the Lord

Himself. Reason without reverence, in religion, is, no doubt, shocking; but reverence without reason is equally so. Both are indispensable for true Religion, and both must be freely used. Freedom is indispensable, but there must be a definite object of worship. We require objective truth, to produce subjective phenomena. But for benefit from the object, it must become ours by spontaneous desire; if espoused either for advantage, or from fear, it is no real union; there is no true wedlock; no becoming of one flesh; there never will be true fruit. But an error of Churches which make objective truth the creature of authority, is their overlooking this fact, or setting it at nought; as the opposite error, that of not sufficiently requiring or defining the object, is that of Churches which allow the exercise of free thought and spontaneous adoption.

A. E., Bp.

LETTER TO A CURATE ON THE MISTAKING OF WORDS FOR THINGS.

MY DEAR ———,

YOU have frequently urged me to put in print the subject of our conversations on religious questions of the day, and I am now about to follow your suggestions in the hope that thoughts which have been useful to you may be profitable to others.

We have often spoken of death together. The question is a very difficult one. Geology reveals to us the reign of death throughout the ages anterior to the Mosaic history. The revelation of the rocks is the history of death in the non-moral creation. St. Paul tells us, that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Was it God's intention that the human family should be beyond the region of death, had it continued in innocence? Such is the

general understanding, and to this the Scriptural record would appear to agree. It would have been well if we had kept to that belief. Unhappily we have made God Himself the source of the destruction of humanity. The conception is really horrible, and yet it has taken a most firm grasp of the mind of man. Very singular it is how the sacred narrative has been wrested to give colour to that belief. It has been so read as to make God chargeable with the death of our first parents for the transgression of His will. That interpretation does not consist with the story of the fall as it is related by Moses. Far from the fact (as it is commonly understood) that God passed the sentence of death upon them because they had taken the forbidden fruit: there is in reality not one word about death whatever in the sentence which He passed upon them as the penalty of their transgression. Such a penalty would have been needless then. Death was already working within them; they were dying creatures. They had brought death upon themselves. They had been mercifully cautioned against touching the fruit of a certain tree. God had forewarned them that death would be the consequence: was He chargeable with their death if, under these circumstances,

they should eat of it? Who among us would cast the blame upon a father, who had warned his child against eating certain pleasant-looking but poisonous fruit? If, after being carefully cautioned, the child died from the effects of the noxious fruit, who would cast the blame at his father's door? Why, under similar circumstances, should we attribute to God the death of our first parents? He had given them a timely warning: was it not suicidal on their part to neglect it?

"But," you have said to me, "there are passages in the New Testament which favour the general belief that death was the infliction of God upon the transgression of our first parents. Our blessed Lord Himself referred to God as the cause of death when He spoke of 'Him who, after He had killed, had power to cast into Hell.'" My answer to that objection has been that, although these words are usually understood in the sense that you take them, the interpretation is, at the least, a doubtful one; and that, if you ask me of whom I understand them, I reply in the words of St. Paul to the Hebrews, "Him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil." I must refuse to believe that God can be chargeable with the death of His creatures; it is to my mind monstrous to suppose such a thing. It would seem to

me an impeachment upon His government and to charge it with weakness, if it could not be maintained without the infliction of capital punishment. God and His laws need no such vindication; and for this, among other reasons, that sin is its own punishment. Sin carries death in its nature. "The soul that sinneth must die" is a fact—a simple fact. The soul that sinneth does die. From the hour that sin gets possession of the soul the seed of death is planted there, and in due course it will arrive at its proper consummation.

Lamentable indeed have been the fruits to mankind of this misconception. Regarding God in the light of his destroyer, it is not wonderful that man's natural instinct has been to shrink from Him as the source of danger. Nor less is it to be wondered at that he should feel that his best hope of safety lay in keeping as far as he could out of His sight, or, at all events, in never venturing to approach Him without an expiatory offering in his hand. Thus it has come to pass that the work which has been done by God in our redemption has been as variously understood by some as it has been grossly misapprehended by others. Looking upon the Almighty as the quarter whence their danger comes, and upon Christ as the averter of His Father's wrath, men have

concocted all manner of "schemes of salvation." Starting from the common point of agreement that the one greatest of all the wants of the human soul is, the pardon of God and the assurance of His forgiveness, they have assumed that there is some utterly insuperable barrier on God's side, and that although His will is to forgive, His attribute of justice stands in the way. We are even admitted by some into the so-called "councils of eternity;" and there we are permitted to see that man's sin must be expiated, God's justice satisfied, and His rule upheld, before the sinner can obtain the pardon of God. When we compare such "schemes of salvation" with God's own revelation of Himself in the Scriptures, great is indeed our relief to find how simple is the plan of salvation which is recorded there. The one great underlying truth of the Bible is, that God's righteousness and His love are not two distinct attributes at variance with each other, but that the absolutely just and holy God is also the infinitely loving and forgiving one. We can find no trace there of any barrier, far less any unwillingness on God's part to pardon even to the uttermost the most sin-degraded of His creatures. The one pervading idea of the Divine mind, as revealed to us in the Scriptures, is the desire on God's

part how to deliver His self-destroyed children from the bondage of sin which is their death, and how to implant in their hearts that love of Himself which is the only life of the human spirit. Above all, when we contemplate for ourselves that picture of God which was drawn by the hand of one that knew all the secrets of Heaven, what is there represented before our eyes but the spectacle of a father throwing his arms about the neck of his prodigal son and, with loving kisses, embracing him? I venture to assert that there is not a single passage in the whole of the New Testament which implies that the Divine forgiveness is in any way fettered or impeded by certain of the attributes of God or the exigencies of His government. Whatever the obstacle is, it is not in that quarter we must look for it.

But pardon is not salvation. If all the sins from a man's childhood to his hoar hairs were freely forgiven him of God, his salvation would still have to be accomplished. It is neither the acts nor the facts of his past life which constitute his demand for salvation. It is his inner life which needs to be set free from the doom of sin. There is a deadly cancer preying upon his soul, and but only one way by which deliverance can come to him, and that is by extirpation.

Sin must be thoroughly rooted out. There is no other salvation for a man as a spiritual being but that. No amount of pardon, nor assurance of forgiveness, can meet the necessities of his case. Sin must be destroyed, or it must needs run its fatal course to its final consummation.

Has it not often struck you that the salvation of Christ must be regarded—from the way in which it is so frequently alluded to, rather as a deliverance in another life from the penalties of wrong-doing in this world, than from the evil nature of sin itself? It seems to me that there must be many whose notion of Christ and His salvation is merely that of an escape through His merits, from the punishment of their evil deeds in the world to come. According to these views, men will be happy or miserable in a future state, according as they have been wise enough to obtain an interest in Christ before they die, or foolish enough to neglect their opportunities. The fact is, there is great confusion in the minds of many men between the penalties of sin and sin itself. Thus it is that they count the penalty rather than the sin out of which it grew, the evil thing from which Christ came to deliver them. But penalty is not necessarily an evil thing at all. Under some circumstances punishment is the

very best thing that can happen to sinners. But tell this to certain people and say, moreover, that He would be no Divine Saviour who came between them and the punishment of their sins, and they doubt either your seriousness or your orthodoxy. At the same time, if you place the matter before them in the form of a familiar illustration, they will probably discern then that there may be some truth in what you tell them. Say to them, for instance, that you know a young man who is easily led into intemperance. It is too likely he will fall a prey to dissipation. Happily for him every excess is followed by a torturing headache. He has that penalty to suffer—and good for him that it is so—as the pains which he then endures are the only barrier between him and habitual drunkenness. Would it be a boon to that youth to be delivered from those sufferings? Do you think it would be the act of friendship, if some one should come to him and say in an hour of racking pain, "I have made a wonderful discovery by which pain can be transferred from one person to another. I could now with your consent bear the agony which you are enduring. Come, let me take it upon me. I am strong; I can bear it; do as I bid you and you will suffer no more." . . . . . What, think

you? would he be a true friend who would so save that youth from the penalty of intemperance? Such friendship as that, I think, you must admit would be anything rather than a boon to him. And yet it is just that kind of service which you would impute to the Son of God in His redeeming work, when you suppose that He came into humanity to bear the penalty of sin. It would be just such a poor office as you would attribute to Him, when you would make Him the Saviour from those sufferings, which are not more the natural fruit of sin than the preventatives of its dominion over us. In good truth penalty is to us sinners what the surgeon's knife is to the patient suffering from a cancerous disease. He would be a very indifferent friend to the poor invalid who would take the knife away. Penalty, indeed, performs the same office to mankind in general which the Law did for the Jewish nation. It reveals sin while it provides no remedy for the sinner. It is very possible to overlook the function which has been assigned to pain in the human economy. In the physical constitution its action is beneficial and conservative. One of the chief offices of the nervous system is to give warning of the presence of danger. But for the alarum which is sounded

by the jarring nerve, a mortal malady might be at any time preying upon our vitals, without any consciousness on our part of its existence. A child playing with a knife would maim its hand irreparably, but that the pain of a cut finger induces it to throw the knife away. So it is in a higher region. Moral pain is not an evil but a good thing. The sense of shame follows quick upon a sinful act ere the conscience is blunted. That sense of shame is the preservation of self-respect. Who would wish to relieve any young girl of the feeling of shame, painful though that feeling may be? How can any one suppose that Jesus Christ could be such a Saviour as that? His name was called Jesus because He came to save the people from their SINS. Long shall we look for any passage in the Scriptures in which He is described as a Saviour from their penalties. "Whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap." There can be no divorce between sin and suffering. The link that binds the two together comes from the Divine forge. It has the mark of God's hand upon it. Sin and suffering must be eternally one, but God be praised, there is a Saviour from sin, and in that way from all its penalties.

The question is often asked of the ministers of religion

regarding the eternal condition of some member of the flock on his removal by death. Is he safe? Will he be on the right hand at the last day? Such question betrays that the inquirer looks upon salvation as the arbitrary act of God. One can only reply that the Gospel reveals a Saviour from sin, and by asking whether the object of inquiry was a saved man in this world—for further than that we cannot go. Was he saved from his sinful nature here? if so, there can be no doubt of his eternal condition. There is, I fear, a very loose way (from which we clergymen cannot altogether exempt ourselves) of speaking of salvation as if it meant only the eventual inheritance of the heavenly kingdom. Such restricted use of the word is apt to be misleading. Salvation is a state as well as an end. Our Catechism expressly speaks of a "state of salvation." We are either in a state of salvation or no. We are either in the process of being delivered from our sinful nature or no in this world. But the truth is, the secrets of our hearts are so carefully guarded within our own breasts, that it is often impossible to tell what the spiritual condition of our dearest friend may be. He may conceal some cherished sin so effectually that we have never once detected its exist-

ence; of others again, we may have no doubts. We see how they are habitually yielding to sins of various descriptions. The parallel between the bodily and spiritual condition is here a very close one. My neighbour is to all appearance in the possession of the most robust health. I am startled by the account of his sudden death. It turns out that he had concealed from every one a malady which proved suddenly fatal. Your neighbour, on the contrary, reveals to all the world, by his feeble step and hectic cheek, that consumption is rapidly wasting the springs of life. So it is in the spiritual region.

It is no unprofitable speculation how far Christianity has gained or lost by the too artificial definitions of systematic theology. We find that St. Paul was bewailing, even in his day, that men's minds were "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." What have we gained by all the distinctions of Christian science which have been the gradual accretion of eighteen centuries? We have gained this:— manifold definitions which have been fruitful of controversy; manifold questions of government and discipline which have broken up the Church into endless sects, with all the bitterness and uncharitableness of religious animosity; we have got

rites and ceremonies without number, which in their turn have been likewise fertile in gendering strife. We have got these, and such things as these, and what have we lost? What have we not lost, when we have built up such a Babel tower of religious words and terms and views and what not, as completely to bury Jesus and His salvation, so far as we could, beneath it? You will say to me that "error must be met and its dangers exposed." Certainly, I reply, error is a dangerous thing, and especially in the things which pertain to Christ and His Salvation; but, let me ask, what can be more pernicious than the error of substituting words for the things, and the knowledge of religious terms for the "knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?" Very beautiful in its simplicity must have been that Gospel which was preached in the Apostolic age, dissociated from those questions connected with Judaism which cropped up so frequently to mar it. To such a one as St. Paul himself, whose idea of religion had been that of ritual faultlessness, how unspeakable the feeling of deliverance from the bondage of Judaism to the liberty wherewith he had been made free in Christ! Who can wonder that he should call the Galatians a senseless people, when they wanted to rivet

anew the fetters which he had struck off their wrists? Who can wonder that he should betray deep anxiety for his Corinthian converts, lest by any means they should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ? The simplicity that is in Christ! Is there no danger that the Christians of the nineteenth century, with all the doctrines and counter-doctrines of these days, which the exigencies of systematic theology demand, should never so much as know the simplicity that is in Christ? Jesus, the Saviour from sin—Jesus, the revealer of a Father in God—Jesus, the Giver of the Holy Spirit. I have seen the comparison, and it strikes me as a very happy one, between the simple religion of Jesus Christ, in the hands of the systematic theologian, and that of some beautiful and fragrant flower in the hands of the botanist, as he plucks it to pieces to discover to what order and species it belongs. All its grace and its odour quickly vanish in the process. He has preserved, it is true, every component part in his herbarium. He can give each its own distinctive name; but the lovely blossom, which could delight the eye and refresh the nostril of the ignorant passer by, is gone for ever. Ah me! the beauteous and fragrant flower of Christianity, may it not suffer by a

similar process? Your learned theologian has all its component parts carefully arranged under their distinctive terms; but, in vain you must look among all those dry and withered leaves of his, for that fresh and fair and simple revelation of the heart of a Father yearning for the love of His sin-destroyed children, which Jesus and His Salvation has laid bare to us.

There is, for example, the doctrine of imputation; what a maze of forensic imagery does not that term suggest! According to certain opinions, righteousness is attributed to believers,—some say the righteousness of God, others the righteousness of Christ. You may think it incredible that any such distinction as that could have been devised; but the subject is one which has nevertheless been gravely debated. However that may be, according to these systems imputation is taken to mean—the giving to certain persons the credit of good qualities which they do not in reality possess. The transaction, in fact, is one in the region of the imagination. The idea is based upon the supposition that the righteousness, which was imputed to Abraham, was something placed to his account as a reward or mark of God's favour for his faith. It is perfectly true that the

words which St. Paul employs are "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." But does he there mean, that something was assigned to Abraham which he did not then possess? By no means; for, in fact, St. Paul tells us, in the very same chapter, that "he received the sign of circumcision—a seal of the righteousness WHICH HE HAD, yet being uncircumcised." Abraham had, in fact, that which was imputed to him. He received credit, in other words, for what he possessed, and not for what he possessed not. His faith was genuine, and being so, it did for him what a true faith does for every man, it justified (or rightened) his soul in its relation to God. For it was not, as if his faith was one good quality and righteousness another good quality, and that God finding faith in Abraham gave him credit—so to speak—for being righteous also. Nothing of the sort. His soul was right with God, and God saw that it was so, and recognised that his righteousness was genuine. Any other meaning would be to reduce the Divine dealings to the level of a legal fiction—as dishonouring to God as it would be injurious to our conceptions of the morality of Heaven. Think, for a moment, what confusion it would create in our minds, if

we were to admit the idea of forensic imagery into the region of spiritual things. John Doe and Richard Roe may be very useful persons in a legal writ. They hurt no man's soul, although he may afterwards discover that they were imaginary beings conjured up for the occasion. But it would be a very different matter for the mind of the man who could believe that any deviation from the strict line of truth could in any case be discerned in the ways of the Almighty. Put the case to yourself, would it not be a shock to your confidence in the rectitude of God and the uprightness of His dealings, if you could believe that He was attributing to you some good quality of which you were painfully aware of your own deficiency; that he could, as it were, make believe to Himself that you were a man of a kind heart when you were bewailing your hard and uncharitable spirit and your insensibility to the claims of genuine distress? There is your neighbour—that worn out debauché—who has now seen the folly and wickedness of his evil life. You heartily rejoice in his conversion to God, but what would you think if you were asked to believe that God was now imputing to him the pure and innocent heart of childhood? Either you must refuse utterly to believe it,

or your moral nature would receive a shock which would shake it to its foundations. I can conceive nothing more hurtful to my reverence of God than the belief that He does not see me as I actually am; nor can I conceive any greater advantage to the side of evil than by lowering the standard of our apprehension of God's attributes. And *cui bono?* What is gained by the imputation of holiness where it does not exist? What advantageth it me to have certain virtues attributed to me which I do not possess? It would be no manner of benefit to me in this life, assuredly none in the life to come. The mere imputation of a heavenly spirit would not fit me for a heavenly world, any more than the imputation of a musical capacity would qualify me to sing in a choir, who am ignorant of a note of music.

But you will say to me that there are certain expressions in the Scriptures which would seem to favour the commonly received acceptation. You will most probably adduce the Apostle's words when he speaks of "putting on Christ," and contend that here is a direct allusion to the transfer of His merits. I am very thankful that St. Paul has employed that expression. I find it very helpful towards understand-

ing this subject. It is to the Galatians that he said they had put on Christ. He connects their putting on Christ with their baptism. The words may have been suggested by the white garments in which the newly baptized were clothed; be that as it may, the idea is a favourite one with the writers of the Old Testament. For instance, Job speaks of the haters of God "being clothed with shame." He himself "puts on righteousness and it clothes him." David beseeches God in one of his Psalms to "clothe his enemies with shame and dishonour;" and in another he speaks of the Almighty as "being clothed with majesty and honour." And so again in the New Testament we have St. Paul exhorting the brethren to be "clothed with humility." Now suppose some homely reader of the Bible, well accustomed to the poetic language of the Psalmists and the Prophets, coming upon such passages as these, how would he understand them? I venture to say that he would discriminate, as if intuitively, between the poetic element and the truth which it had to convey. Shame, righteousness, majesty, honour, would be no figures, but realities to him. It would never cross his mind that when Job was imprecating shame upon the enemies of God, that it was only the figure of

shame and not the thing itself that he sought for them; or when he spoke of putting on righteousness it was some figurative righteousness with which he clothed himself. And so I think, that the same person would not fall into the error of supposing, that when he came in the New Testament to such an expression as "putting on Christ," it was something less than real that was intended. "Putting on Christ!" he would say to himself, "how am I to put on Christ? There is but one way so far as I can see that I can put on Christ, and that is by having the same spirit in me that was in Him. If I can get His spirit in me, then I think I should put on Christ in reality." Necessarily he would go on to ask himself, what was the spirit of the life of Christ? Was it not this? A perfect filial trust in God—a thorough devotion to the interests of man—a perfect sonship as regards God—a perfect brotherhood as regards man. And so then to put on Christ can be no fictitious transfer of His merits—no judicial whitening of a surface which is foul within, but a real fellowship with Christ in the Spirit: it must be to have His feelings in my heart towards God and towards man, and nothing other or less than that.

I cannot doubt that very considerable injury has been

done to the cause of Godliness by the misconception of the meaning of the word "justification." It may have two meanings. Either the attitude of God towards man, or of man towards God. Every theologian knows that the root of justification and righteousness is the same in the Greek. Others, whose acquaintance with the New Testament is derived solely from the English version, are at a great disadvantage in that respect, for the want of a key which would unlock the meaning of many passages, especially in the writings of St. Paul, which are obscure and difficult to them. In fact, very needless obscurity has been created by the translators of the New Testament from the use of the word "justify" in place of the old English word "righten." As a proof of this consult any of those numerous passages in the Epistle to the Romans where that word or its cognates occur, and you will find how clear and simple the meaning comes out by the substitution of the word "righten." For example, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." If the Apostle's meaning there is, that faith is that condition in man which affects the attitude of God towards us sinners—how are we to be assured of the fact? It must be more or less a matter of uncertainty to us whether we are

justified in his sight or no. No man can tell how God regards the character of his faith. But if you read the passage thus, "Being rightened by faith," &c., you are then dealing with a fact within the region of your own spiritual experience. You know for certain whether your faith has rightened you in your attitude towards God. You know for certain that it gives peace to your soul or no. The great underlying truth of all such passages is that the soul is utterly wrong with God, and that the first and foremost of all its needs is rectification. That office faith performs for it. It is the great rectifier. The atoning death and resurrection of Christ is the central object of Christian faith. There can be no doubt about that. "Being rectified by faith, we HAVE peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Eleventh Article, in its definition of "the justification of man," says that we are accounted righteous before God only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings. This statement is not a happy one, in view of the case of Abraham. Apply it to his case, and there are elements introduced for which you can find no place without a violent straining of facts to serve a purpose. It is out of square. Compare the

passages in the Old and New Testament which speak of Abraham's faith, and the conclusion is irresistible that he was justified by his own simple trust in God. In a certain sense, no doubt, the Messiah may be said to have been the object of his faith. "Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." Still it must have been through a glass darkly. The Scriptures say not a word from which we may assume that Abraham had any distinct knowledge of the Atonement, beyond the belief in the fulfilment of the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. St. Paul, at all events, makes no allusion to the Atonement as being the ground of his faith. So far as his Epistles express his mind on that subject, the impression which is conveyed by them is, that Abraham was justified by his own faith in God. He saw, dimly it may have been, dimly it must have been, that ground for trusting God which is now seen clearly by the Atonement. If we may not accept that interpretation—the difficulties, not to say the shifts, are numerous to which we must have recourse to explain the matter. Suppose it be allowed that the case of Abraham was exceptional; where then is the comfort and the benefit of his example? Why does

St. Paul refer to him as the father of all them that believe? Why does he adduce him as the great pattern to all who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham? Suppose that Abraham was justified by his own faith, but that no man is so justfied now, however genuine and loyal is his trust in God: observe the conclusion. It is this, that God is more inaccessible to us in the Christian than He was in the Patriarchal dispensation, that the Atonement has actually placed an obstacle between us and God which did not exist in the days of Abraham. The supposition is absurd. The immutable God must be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; but such a supposition as this would not only require that He has changed in His nature towards us, but changed for the worse. But you will perhaps say, if simple faith in God will still justify, what was the necessity for the sacrifice of Christ? do you not make it of no avail? I answer, Far from that. I, for my part, should have never known my ground of faith in God, but for the Atonement. It has revealed to me a depth of sin in my own heart, and a depth of love in the heart of God, of which I should otherwise have been an utter stranger. "He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." How Abraham

came in those dark and ignorant times, to know God so as to trust Him to the uttermost, I have no help from the Scriptures to discover; but this I do know, that I should never have known my own need of salvation, nor my ground of confidence to seek it in God, if Christ had not revealed to me the one and the other. So feeling, I do sincerely regret that the compilers of the Eleventh Article should have taken justification in its passive rather than its active sense, when we all must acknowledge that "we are rightened only through the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our works and deservings."

We must often feel with St. Peter that there are many things in St. Paul's Epistles "hard to be understood." I am afraid that interpreters of his meaning have not always succeeded in making them plainer. Great and unquestionable as are our obligations to commentators, we should never forget that the Scriptures are oftentimes their own best interpreter. For what is the Bible but a Father's explanation to His children of His will for them and of the workings of their own hearts? If you saw an earthly father gathering his family around him to explain his mind to them on certain subjects which it was very important that they should understand, would you not

expect that he should make his own meaning clear? Would it not astonish you, if while so engaged one of his children should call aloud and say, "Stop, sir, we must have some one to explain your words to us?" You would be struck with the singularity of such a proposal. You would feel that the father must be of all men the most able to make his own meaning plain, and to adapt his words to the several capacities of his children. Now, looking at the Bible in that light, I must believe that it will stand in very little need of a human guide to its meaning. Those at least who approach it with the reverent and humble spirit of a child of God, expecting to hear his Father's voice in it, will not require some one by his side who will say, "Your Heavenly Father here means this;" or, "Your Heavenly Father here means that;" or, "Be sure you do not put a wrong meaning on His words here;" or, "Be careful you do not put a dangerous construction on His words there." For my part, I cannot think that even the Pope of Rome, with the dogma of infallibility settled in his favour, would be a help; indeed, I am sure he would be an obstruction to me under the circumstances. I do not indeed pretend—very far from that—that I can understand all that I read; nay, I am sure I understand

but very little, because there must be depths of meaning in the Word of God which, with my poor spiritual insight, are quite hidden from me. But of this I am confident, that I never misunderstand what I read to my soul's hurt, or ever lay down the Bible without deriving profit from its meditation.

There has been no subject which has suffered more from excessive definition than that of the Holy Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. It may be, I think, matter of question whether the Catechism of the Church of England has not erred in that particular. Concise as it is on all other points, it has enlarged upon the doctrine of the Lord's Supper to the extent that a *locus standi* has been afforded to those who substitute the participation of an ordinance for that faith which apprehends the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. For, in good truth, there are now within the English Church, and claiming indeed to be its most loyal members, who no longer regard the Lord's Supper as an ordinance bearing testimony to the life which is by faith of the Son of God, but as a mystery communicating spiritual life by material elements. For the Sacramentalist requires us to repudiate as a true spiritual life any quickening in our

souls which may have come to them from apprehending the mind and the grace of God by the light of the Atonement, and to acknowledge that the Sacraments are the only sure channels whereby the life of Christ is conveyed to the soul. The Roman Catholic priest teaches the doctrine of his Church, and no more, in assuring his flock that the consecrated elements of bread and wine are the literal body and blood of Christ. When the clergyman of the Church of England assures his flock that they are mystically His body and blood, he is thereby requiring them to exercise a faith in regard to those consecrated substances, which is quite another, and at variance with, that faith in Christ which He Himself and His apostles invariably set forth as the one ground of salvation. I fear that there is a great deal of confusion in regard to the doctrine of the Real Presence from the meaning of that expression not being understood by many who profess to hold it. "Real Presence" is a purely artificial term. Theologians understand by it an efficacious presence. Although every clergyman must be aware that such is the sense given to it by such divines as Bishop Jeremy Taylor, it must nevertheless be the case that the great bulk of ordinary congregations understand the expression to imply some

more actual presence of Christ in the Holy Communion than is vouchsafed by Him at any other time, or under any other circumstances. Let us regard this question of His presence in a simple and reverent spirit. Our blessed Lord in His humanity is at the right hand of the Majesty of God. Our blessed Lord in His divinity is omnipresent. But a person, whether human or spiritual, is either absent or present. His absence or presence is incapable of degree. He cannot be more or less present or absent at the same place and at the same time. If our blessed Lord is present in the Holy Communion, He is also present where two or three are gathered together in His name. In either case, His presence must be one and the same. But while that is so, a question of degree may freely arise as to our capacity to apprehend and appropriate His presence. Then, indeed, Christ may be more really, because more efficaciously, present to the soul of one man than another, and may be more really present to the same man at one time than another. That arises from the different spiritual condition of the two men, or of the same man at different periods. The question is not then one of objectivity, but of subjectivity. If you admit that, then there can be no difficulty

in subscribing to the doctrine of a real presence in the Holy Sacrament of Christ's body and blood. Who could wish to deny that Christ was in a very real sense present to the soul of His devout believer then? When you visit your mother's grave, is she not in a very real sense present to you then? You see her as you can see her, it may be, at no other time in your daily life. The spot, the associations, have brought her back to you. You are again by her side. You look into her face as you were wont to do before she was taken away from you. So it is that the memorials of the Saviour's Death and Passion enable you to feel His presence and to realize the greatness of His love far more vividly at the Holy Communion than under any other circumstances.

The Saxon element in our blood is more favourable to action than to contemplation. Like the lawyer in the Gospels, we want to be doing something that will secure us an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Lord's answer to him is a very valuable subject for our reflection. It implies that Heaven is not to be obtained, as he supposed, by one great heroic action, or even by any series of good works; but by that kind of life which in the language of

our Lord is called "eternal." Now eternal and endless are not one and the same thing. Eternal life is a description of life, as well as being everlasting in its duration. That kind of life which Christ lived in the flesh is life eternal. Even when He died upon the cross He had life eternal in Him. And just as we live here, so have we life eternal in us or no. St. Paul said of himself that Christ lived within him. How could he venture to say that? Only from the assurance that the spirit of his own life was (with, doubtless, many shortcomings and imperfections) one with the Spirit of the life of Christ. As he grew in holiness, and charity, and forbearance, and sympathy with man and devotion to God, he would more and more feel that it was the Spirit of Christ that dwelt in him. If St. Paul had said that he had eternal life in himself, he would have only expressed the same truth in different words. St. John says it in his first Epistle when he wrote, "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and that life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." Let us live the life of Christ. Let us strive to be to God and for God, what He was. Let us strive to be to man, and for man,

what He was, and we shall have life eternal in ourselves.

We live in anxious times. The old institutions of our country are upon their trial. Sometimes it would seem as if they were about to break up, unequal to the strain of the nineteenth century. What the Church of the future may be to us English Christians is a question we cannot face without awe, and yet, I venture to think, from the spirit of honest inquiry which is abroad, not without hopefulness. Face it we must. The discoveries of science, the difficulties of religion, the earnestness of contention, and the mass opposed to all inquiry, assuredly indicate that we are on the eve of some great crisis in our religious history. "Theology," say some, "is dead in England. All it wants now is a decent burial." Be it so, if from its grave there is to come a better resurrection.

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Your attached Friend,

* * * * * *

PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., CITY ROAD, LONDON.

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS

Concerning the Church and Mankind.

PREFACE

BY THE REV. FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE.

THE Right Rev. Editor of the "Present Day Papers" has desired me to write a few remarks, as an introduction to some anonymous *Meditations on the Church and Mankind*, which have been placed in his hands, and which he intends to publish. I comply with his injunctions; for though I think that words addressed to God can only be intelligible to the reader so far as they express his own needs, so far as he prays them himself, I can, perhaps, describe from my own experience certain perplexities which are besetting us at this time, and from which there seems to be no escape for priest or layman, unless we may ask Him who is Light to deliver us from a darkness that learned dogmatic treatises, well-conducted controversies, elaborate expositions of Scripture, seem rather to deepen than to dispel.

I. Anglican Episcopalians, Scotch Presbyterians, Romanists, Greeks, a majority of English Dissenters, are baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. There are those who deny this baptism to children, not from indifference to it, but from a high estimation of its importance. There are Quakers who do not use the outward rite at all, attaching to baptism a great inward significance. There are Unitarians who may, with some hesitation, use the familiar words in giving names to their children; more, probably, who shrink from them as involving the confession of a doctrine which they deem incompatible with the acknowledgment of the one God.

Accomplished doctors and divines have exercised themselves in confuting this last opinion; in shewing what arguments from Scripture, from primitive testimonies, from long ecclesiastical traditions, establish the doctrine of the Trinity. Accomplished doctors and divines have displayed much skill in confuting the Quaker rejection of baptism, in vindicating the baptism of children against those who would confine it to adults. To these arguments all the portions of the Christian world, which I spoke of first, have contributed. Romanists, Anglicans, Scotch Presbyterians,

a majority of the English Dissenters, accept them as satisfactory. But they are not the least agreed among themselves about the nature and effect of the ordinance which seems, to an onlooker, the common bond between them all. A new and exhausting series of controversies on this subject awaits us when the others have been concluded. Does Baptism signify to us, as our Catechism affirms, that we are children of God? Is the divine name really put upon us, really linked inseparably to our own names? Or, is it only a ceremony which may mean something in after days, if our faith gives it meaning?

The most serious men and women have probably felt at different stages of their lives—possibly at the same stage—the force of the arguments on each side of this question; have striven painfully to determine which of the opposite opinions they should embrace, which they should reject. They have been assured vehemently by both parties that a Church which leaves the dispute open proves itself not to be a true one; that it must declare itself in favour of those who take up one position, and treat as heretics the supporters of the other. They assent to the assertions made by the dogmatists of both schools that the

question of what a man is, or is not, must be a most serious one to each of us; they crave for some clear determination upon that point, if it can be had. They are puzzled by those who tell them that it cannot be had; that they must try to live and act without it. That seems to them more and more difficult, so they find themselves drifting into a scepticism which withers action, which turns life into a dream. They hear that such scepticism is spreading among others, that it is a characteristic of the age; be that as it may, they feel that it is growing in themselves.

I cannot suppose that any Baptists, or Quakers, or Unitarians will think it unreasonable to ask the Father, whom they confess, how He is related to them? whether the relation is one which embraces others as well as themselves? to whom it may be proclaimed as real? how they may become aware of its reality? I should suppose they would all have more hope of a result from such petitions offered in ever so much doubt and confusion than in any contentions or speculations. But at all events those who hold baptism not to be a fiction, the Name into which they are baptized to be the Eternal Name—those who begin their confession with saying, "We believe in God, the Father

Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," and who connect the rest of their creed with the first words of it, *they* cannot deem this experiment to be a hazardous one; they must be ready to venture all upon it. For, surely, if this baptism has meant anything to me, or to any man, it has meant this: that he and I have been under a divine education; that every step in his life and in mine has been somehow, in ways past our finding out, leading us onwards to some goal, to some discovery. If it has not been so, let Him in whom we say that we believe tell us that it is not so! Let us ask Him boldly, if He is Truth, not to leave us in a lie. I cannot deliver myself from lies. He can deliver me. At any rate, I will beg Him to do so.

That seems to me the spirit of the prayers which this writer has poured forth. I take him to be a priest of our communion from the character of his confessions. But I should suppose that any layman or laywoman in any communion might, with the same confidence, ask to be guided by the Spirit of Truth into all truth; by the Spirit of Unity into such faint apprehension as we may attain of the divine Unity. If we believe that the perfect Unity is that which the baptismal form expresses, we cannot expect

to ascend to it on giant hills of tradition or of argumentation. We may believe that a loving Father will enable the feeblest of His children to enter into the love which is the highest knowledge, which passes knowledge.

II. "But it is not doctrines we are first of all concerned "with. We want to know which of all the different Churches "has a right to pronounce on Doctrines, or is likeliest to "make the right guess about them; which has the credentials "of a divine origin; which is the channel for divine grace. "Your Episcopal Churches exclude those that are called "Presbyterian. The Dissenters in England and Scotland "complain of both. Romanists look upon all as equally cut "off from the divine Sacraments, from the fellowship of the "faithful. We have listened to these debates. Each of you "seems to make out a good case against the other. We are "beginning to think that you have all proved your point "negatively; therefore that there is no Church left in the "world."

That there should be this utter weariness of our disputations in men to whom the question at issue is one of comparative indifference, is surely no cause for surprise. But what must be the weariness of those to whom the

existence of a Church is one of infinite consequence? How must *they* groan under the weight of these ingenious and often successful counter-confutations, who have actually believed that the Apostle *bowed his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the whole Family in Heaven and earth is named?* What anguish must it be to them to find, on the testimony of so many learned Christian divines, of various persuasions, that no traces of *such* a Family are to be found in this world of ours; that there are societies on earth constituted on different maxims, each professing to have a great knowledge of the way in which men are to reach Heaven when they die; but that these societies form anything rather than a family, according to the notion which is attached to that name below, and one would fancy according to any pattern of it above!

Suppose any one to have arrived at an age in which fictions are intolerable to him, in which he cannot put up with titles as substitutes for that which they pretend to represent; such reflections threaten to breed in him an utter despair. Every idea of a common fatherhood or common brotherhood seems to be subverted by the society, which, according to the New Testament, has been called

out that these words may not be mere words, may stand for everlasting facts.

And yet what good comes of complaining that one or another sect or church to which I do not belong has set these principles at nought?

Let me begin with my own professions. What do I mean by describing myself as an Episcopalian? I mean that I acknowledge Fathers in God; witnesses that there is such a family in Heaven and earth as St. Paul speaks of. I may think that it is a loss to be without this witness; that the Presbyter or elder brother is a less intelligible name when it is not associated with that of Father. I may be still more shocked when any one narrows the family on earth, and separates it from that in Heaven, by insisting that any Father in Rome is the head of it. But if I cut off Presbyterians or Romanists from this family, because in my judgment they are contracting it, I am guilty of the very sin which I charge upon them. And since I shall be always tempted to this sin—always inclined to claim an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and in this brutal game of excommunication to fling back with as much violence as I can the ball which was thrown at me—what can I do but call upon

that Father who judges us all without respect of persons, to maintain the completeness and fellowship of His own Household against the tendency which is working in every one of us to rend it in pieces?

I do not understand that the writer of these Meditations was (or is) the least dissatisfied with his position in the Church, or desired to change it for any other. I should think he would have been suspicious of any inclinations which might arise in him either to desert the ground on which he stood, or to draw men of other Churches and Communions from theirs. But if there is one body and we are members one of another, he might earnestly desire that this truth should be revealed to all, and that they should hold their different positions and fulfil their different tasks in the strength of Him who is the Head of the Church and of every man.

III. *Of the Church and of every Man.*—That I apprehend is the reason why he could not divide his Meditations on the Church from Meditations on Mankind. It is impossible to deny that these two subjects of thought have been kept as wide as the poles asunder, not by one section of Christians, but by all. Nay, is it not the great boast of

each section that it is a safer refuge from a doomed world than all the others; that it offers an ark of refuge which they do not offer? That metaphor of the Ark is the favourite one in verse and prose. Yet how little is the recollection of the old Ark retained in it! That was to preserve a single family to the end that the race might not perish. In this, Ham as well as Noah is rescued from an irremediable destruction, which we are taught will overtake an immense majority of all who have been called into existence, of all whose nature Christ bore!

That any one should be overwhelmed by these contradictions; that he should recollect how the Jews turned the promise to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed all the families of the earth shall be *blessed*," into a promise that all the families of the earth should be cursed except their own, how for this reason they rejected Him who called Himself the Son of Man, preferring any inhuman Cæsar or Barabbas to Him: that a Churchman should ask himself whether the Church which is emphatically called out of all nations to be a herald of *salvation* can escape a worse excision than that of Israel, if it becomes a herald of damnation, even in the name of its Lord and Saviour; I

at least cannot wonder. The last is a question which may make us all tremble. In the Meditations which refer to the Eucharist I observe that this writer is staggered by the contrast between the "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the whole world," which we speak of in our service, and the kind of language respecting the world which proceeds continually from the very lips that utter this joyful thanksgiving.

Is the Pulpit set up to contradict the message of the Altar? May not all the miserable, beggarly controversies with which we degrade that Sacrament—may not the fearful fact that the Symbol of Peace on earth and good-will to men, is the symbol between parties of their exclusions—be traced to this direct inversion of the testimony which it was to bear of "Christ's death till He come?"

But though the language of this writer, when it is most mournful over this subject, does call up an echo in me, and may, perhaps, in several of his readers, I dare not omit to notice signs of another kind which he has overlooked, and which, if he really prayed for light to the Most High, I think he would have hailed. What, for instance, can be

more cheering, more invigorating, than these words which I have read lately in a sermon (I presume) by a clergyman of what is called the High Church School?—

"I am (the Church tells me) a priest of the Most High God. How easily I may rest in the office itself, contemplate it apart from its *end*, and consequently be unfaithful (as the Epistle says) in my stewardship of the mysteries of God! I may act as if I were the minister of the opinions of one man, or of a party of some men, and not the minister of Christ—the head of every man. The Church therefore lays hold of us in the middle of Advent, and bids us, by the light of Christ's Advent, look and see what we are and what is our function and calling in this world. God is giving to His humankind a clergy for the same end that He has given it a Bible. Every bishop is consecrated, every priest and deacon ordained, that humanity may "have hope." Yes; may lay hold of "*the* hope,"—that which Holy Scripture everywhere means by the hope of mankind,—that Christ its Head, its Judge, its King, its Deliverer, will come again. Our function is to deliver His human creatures in His name from the hopelessness and despair into which they are naturally sinking when they behold the apparent triumphs of the

devil, the world, and the flesh, which are so boastfully and largely written in the history of the Church, the history of peoples, the biography of our own conscience, and of every conscience which opens its wounds to us and asks us for healing." *

These noble sentiments, much as they oppose a habit of thought which has prevailed widely amongst us, will, nevertheless, I am persuaded, be recognised by numbers in every school amongst us as Scriptural and orthodox. Our children may receive them as commonplaces, though to us they sound paradoxes. And if they are not merely regarded as obvious truths, but are acted out as living truths, God will prepare a soil to receive them when we least expect it. The disciples of the *Brâhma Somaj*, in India, declare that an external civilisation is not what they care for, that they demand a living faith; that nothing else will regenerate individuals or nations.† England may yet be appointed to compensate the wrongs she has done to her Hindoo subjects by helping them to seek for such a faith; they may help to restore it among us, if we confess the sins of the past

* Sermon preached in Advent, 1869, by Rev. T. Hancock.

† See a most remarkable sermon preached at the Thirty-eighth Anniversary of the Brahma Somaj, on January 24, 1868.

and accept the punishment of them. We need indulge in no dark auguries about the future. The Church may yet be restored; if not, the Head of the Church will be manifested for the restoration of mankind.

The vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak and not lie; if it tarry wait for it; it will come, it will not tarry.

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS

Concerning the Church and Mankind.

IF there are any to whom these words commend themselves, they will know why the name of the writer is suppressed. Of any thoughts that are worthy in them, he cannot be the author. The true Author of all good thoughts and petitions can make them as much the thoughts and petitions of those who read them as of him, whether still on the earth or departed from it, who first set them down in letters.

The Father in Heaven.

O Father in Heaven, there have been times when I have almost lost all thought of Thee. Worldly lusts have buried it; when I have longed for the good opinion of men, the remembrance of Thee has nearly perished. In

the worship of Thee Thou hast seemed to be very distant. Whenever I have valued myself on anything I have done, or believed,—when I have exalted myself above any fellow-creature, Thou hast been hidden from me. Why have I not ceased to acknowledge Thee altogether? Why has the name of Father haunted me and pursued me when I have tried most to escape from it? My education has not preserved it to me, though I bless Thee for the parents who spoke of it to me, and who taught me something of what it meant by their care and tenderness. But as my thoughts unfolded themselves, as the visible world made me feel its power, as I began to glorify my own soul, their words died in me, I could not bring them home to my own self. And, O God! what were all the arguments to me about Thy existence, and Thy dominion over the world? How did they bring Thee nearer to me? Could I find Thee because Thy servants told me that I ought to believe in Thee, that Thou wouldst destroy me if I did not? How far off has Thy Heaven appeared to me, even when I said the words, and owned them to be true, "He is not far from any one of us!" But Thou hast convinced me that Heaven is the Father's house from which I have

wandered; that I need not live upon the food of swine, that I need not live on the more miserable food of my own self-conceit. Thou hast said, "Arise, and come to me, and I will meet Thee." And the Spirit within me has answered, "Father, draw me to Thee, and I will come." That prayer my spirit would utter afresh every morning, every moment. If I am Thy child, if Thou ownest me, convert me to Thee. Set me free from all the false gods that I have made, that I do make, for myself to worship. Turn me from myself to Thee, the Author of myself. In Thee only I can find why I exist, why death does not swallow me up; why it is not a curse to dwell on the earth, and to see the sun. Father of my spirit, Thou art in heaven, and I upon earth; yet I think there must be a way from Thee to me, from me to Thee. O show me what the way is. Help me to walk in it now and evermore. Amen.

The Father and the Son.

Father of my spirit, I have heard the message which Jesus brought in His words and His acts, to the poorest and most sinful of Thy creatures. I have believed that He spoke to the outcasts in Judea and Galilee as if they

were His brethren, as if they were Thy children. I have believed that He delivered them from the plagues which tormented their bodies and their spirits; that He died their death; that Thou didst raise Him out of death; didst exalt Him to be the Prince and High Priest of men; therefore I have dared to call Thee in Him "Our Father." Many have told me that this is a fiction of other days, a dream which I only cherish because it is a pleasant one, or because it is the tradition of my country. Thou knowest, O Searcher of Hearts, if that is so. Thou knowest how I have struggled, and do struggle continually, against a faith which puts me upon the level of the lowest of my race. Thou knowest how hard it is for one selfish as I am, who am disposed to value my fellow-creatures only as they minister to my pleasure, or diminish my pains, to think of them as dear and precious in Thy sight, dear in Him in whose image Thou hast made them, by whose sacrifice Thou hast redeemed them. And Thou knowest how sorely the traditions of my country—its base money-worship, its desire to magnify Englishmen above other men, and those who hold our creed above those who reject it—have contended in me with this Gospel to all kindreds and nations, to

the unthankful and the evil. Thou knowest how many motives urge me to cast off this Christian confession, yea, to treat it with utter scorn. But Thou hast not suffered me to do it. Because it exposes and puts to shame my arrogance and self-sufficiency; because it forces me to esteem Jew and Turk and Infidel, as no less dear to Thee than I am, who bear the name of Christian; because it obliges me to confess that I have been more an unbeliever than any of them are, and that I shall be an unbeliever still unless Thou keep me in Thy faith and fear, and in union with my fellow-men; therefore has this faith in Thy Son our Lord withstood the shocks that have assailed it from without, and the more terrible shocks from within. O God, if it had been a dream of the night, surely the morning dawn would have scattered it. But the sight of my fellow-men perishing around me, the sense how little I can help them, or care to help them; facts, which no dreams can alter or make tolerable; these have been Thy instruments, O Father, for leading me to the Son of Man, for teaching me of His cross and resurrection, for proving to me that He is the way by which Thou comest to Thy human creatures, and by which they may

come to Thee. O deepen these convictions in me. Let me not think that there is any private road by which I can enter into Thy presence. Let me plead as a man among men, as a sinner among sinners, that He has entered into the holiest of the holiest, tearing down the veil of flesh which concealed it; and therefore, that we may draw nigh, with full assurance of faith, our hearts being purged from an evil conscience. Teach me indeed to say in His name, who is one with us, and one with Thee, "Our Father which art in Heaven." Amen.

The Father and the Son United in the Spirit.

O Father! Thine ancient people repeat to us the words, "The Lord our God is one Lord." They say that if we honour the Son even as we honour Thee we are worshipping two gods. Thou knowest, who knowest the secrets of all hearts, how I have been led to feel that I could not worship Thee at all whilst I regarded Thee as a being wrapt in Thine own solitary majesty, apart from all fellowship with Thy creatures. I bowed before something which I called God, and which seemed immense. But how little I trusted Thee as Thy people of Israel were bidden to trust

Thee! How impossible it seemed to understand what the prophets and psalmists of Israel meant by taking refuge in Thee! I was told that these were metaphors, which helped to explain Thy nature to our weak faculties. But they explained nothing to me, for I needed realities, not metaphors. If Thou wert only a shadow or likeness of the things which I saw, or of myself, how could I put my trust in Thee? what refuge couldst Thou be from the shadows about me, and from my own bewildered thoughts? But when I began to believe that Thou hadst, indeed, shown Thy true image to us, that there is a Son in whom Thou delightest, that in Him Thou canst meet with us, then it seemed as if the spirit within me might have a home, and that Thou must be, not in name but in truth, our dwelling-place from generation to generation.

So I felt that I could only truly honour Thee if I honoured the Son. If ever I have thought to honour Him apart from Thee, then all His grace, and truth, and obedience have been hidden from me. But how have I learnt even the little that I have learnt of Thy Unity? How can I hold fast that little for a single moment? How can it become more? That message of a Spirit proceeding from the Father and the

Son; a Spirit who speaks to our spirits because we are Thy children; a Spirit who teaches us of the Father and the Son, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Holiness, the Spirit of Unity,—oh, how hardly I have received it! how often it has vanished from me! Yet, what darkness it has scattered when I have entertained it! What a promise there has been in it of a light which shall overcome all darkness; of a life before which death must fly away! If Thou hadst taken this Spirit from us—if He had left us altogether for an hour—could there have remained one thought, or a hope, or a wish within us? Would not all the universe have become anarchy and chaos? Surely He makes us understand ourselves and one another. Surely it is He who says to us, "You are not aliens, but children, you belong to God's household." It must be then in Thy light that we see light. Thy Spirit alone can teach us to pray. We pray because He prays in us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And yet, what have we to pray for but that Thou wouldst give us this Spirit, that Thou wouldst renew this Spirit in us day by day, that Thou wouldst fulfil to us the promise of the Christ, "He shall baptize with the Spirit and with fire?"

Thou hast permitted us to be baptized with water. By that sign we believe that Thou hast signified our adoption into Thy family, our union with Thy beloved Son in His death. But is not this a promise of what is more wonderful still, more awful? What it is how can we know except by receiving the gift? It must denote the burning of the chaff that is in us; it must mean that Thou wilt Thyself be present with us whilst Thou art consuming that which Thou hatest. They say, O God, that we are to tell sinners of the unquenchable fire which Thou art reserving for them, when they shall dwell no longer upon the earth. But is not Thy fire about us now? If Thy everlasting Spirit is in Thy Church, does not the everlasting fire come with it? Could Thy Church live if this fire were extinguished? We cry to Thee for quietness; but canst Thou give us quietness in our corruptions, in our divisions? Is there any peace for us except in Thee? Thou hast warned us by the example of the Jewish nation how those who are sealed with Thy name may count themselves better than others, how all the time their sins may be grieving Thee more than those of the heathen. Thou hast taught us that Thou wert merciful to both, and therefore didst

punish both. Are not we mistaking Thy calling even more than the Jews mistook it? Hast not Thou appointed Thy Church to be the herald of Thy love to mankind, and are we not telling men that Thou carest for a few, and hast only designs of wrath against those who are outside Thy fold? Have we not talked of Thy punishments as if they were curses, when we should own them for blessings which we cannot part with till Thou hast purged out the evil from us, and brought us to be really like Thy Son? O God, are we not to feel more of these tremendous purifying fires? Are they not already breaking forth in every part of Christendom? Are not our complaints of the infidelity and anarchy of the times testimonies that Thou art sifting and proving us? What vanity, what lies will not Thy search bring to light in us! But wilt not Thou, indeed, baptize us with the Spirit as well as with fire? He has been with us, and we have not confessed Him or known Him. We have glorified ourselves for that which has been His work in us; we have denied His work in our fellow-men. We have tried to persuade ourselves that lies in us are not like lies in heathens, or unbelievers; that Thou wilt not visit us for our wickedness as Thou

visitest them. We have dreamed that for us to slander and suspect our brethren is not to offend against Thee; that our bitterness, strife, hatred, have a sacredness and divinity in them if they are cherished in Christ's name. Gracious Father! are not these treasons against Thy Holy Spirit, whether in priest or lay Christian, such as no Jews, or Mohammedans, or idolaters have been ever guilty of? Because Thou hast revealed to us more of Thy name, because we are brought nearer to Thee, we think we shall escape Thy judgment, while we threaten Thy judgments against those who have been left in darkness. If Thy judgment be light, let it come, however we may shrink from it, to us all. Prove us, O Lord, and try our ways, and see if there be any wicked way in us. We know that Thy will is that all shall be saved and come to the knowledge of Thy truth. If we can only be saved by fire, if we can only come to the knowledge of Thy truth by the casting out of the Spirit of Falsehood, with ever so much of rending and tearing, yet may that blessed will of Thine be done! Let the Spirit of the Father and the Son conquer whatever in us and in Thy whole creation strives against it. Since He is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Freedom, the Spirit of

Love; all tyranny, slavery, selfishness must be His enemies. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Trinity in Unity.

Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons in one God, teach us to worship and adore that absolute Trinity, that perfect Unity. And that we may adore Thee, that our worship may not be a mockery, make us to know that we are one in Christ, as the Father is one with the Son and the Son with the Father. Suffer us not to look upon our sectarianism as if it were a destiny. Help us to regard it as a rebellion against Thee, as a denial of Thee such as no verbal denials, no mistakes in the definition of terms, can ever be. Help us to see all distinctions more clearly in the light of Thy Everlasting Love; help us to recognise the truth of every effort to express something of that which passes knowledge. Help us to feel and confess the feebleness of our own efforts. So may Thy holy name embrace us more and more. So may all creatures in heaven and earth and under the earth at last glorify Thee, through all ages. Amen.

The Filial Sacrifice.

Thou didst teach Thy prophet of old, O Father, that to obey is better than sacrifice. Thou didst teach the preacher of the New Covenant that Thy Son offered the perfect sacrifice when He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Thou dost command us, through Thy Apostles, to offer our bodies living sacrifices to Thee, for that is our reasonable service. My reason responds to this lesson. I believe that Thou hast adopted us to be sons, and that only when we own that we are Thy sons can we obey Thee, and that to obey Thee means to offer not something else, but our own very selves, our wills and affections, all the energies of our minds and of our bodies, to Thee. If Thou art not our Father, if we may not trust Thee absolutely, entirely, if we may not believe that Thou willest our good and only our good, I feel that I cannot obey Thee, that I may submit to Thy sovereign decrees because I can do nothing else, but that I shall inwardly and in my will resist them. Have I not resisted Thee, O Father of Spirits, do not I resist Thee continually, because I distrust Thee, because I deny my own inward convictions respecting Thee, and behave as if

Thou wert a tyrant whilst I speak of Thee as a deliverer? And how can any sacrifice bring me nearer to Thee whilst that is the spirit in which I offer it?

Merciful Father! if our Elder Brother has not offered a perfect obedience, a perfect sacrifice to Thee, what bond can there be between Thee and us? How selfish must be everything I do that I may approach to Thee the perfect Charity, how alien from Thy Nature—Thy Life! I must be striving to be better in Thy sight than my brethren whilst my conscience owns me to be worse; I must be hoping that Thou wilt accept me for the very acts which prove that I am disobeying Thee by not loving them as I love myself. But if Thy only begotten Son has indeed done Thy will by giving Himself up for us all; if, as we have been taught and as we have professed, Thou hast reconciled the world unto Thyself in Him, wilt Thou not with Him freely give us His spirit of obedience and self-sacrifice? Wilt Thou not enable us to offer ourselves true sacrifices to Thee, not that we may win anything from Thee, but that Thou mayest use us to do Thy work, to fulfil Thy purposes towards men? Are not the sacrifices which Thou seekest from us, sacrifices which are

really thine own sacrifices, of which Thou art the Author as well as the receiver? Father, we need the Baptism which Thou hast promised, the Baptism of the Spirit and of fire, to kindle those sacrifices and to burn up the selfish offal which cleaves to them. When that Baptism is indeed bestowed upon Thy Church, will it not with new heart and new life proclaim the sacrifice of Thy Son to all nations? We have proclaimed it so that men have mistaken it for one of those sacrifices which they offer to win cruel and evil gods to their side, to secure immunity for their base doings and dark thoughts; to keep Thee from making inquisition for the blood which the earth conceals. Arise, O Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and scatter those fearful delusions which are destroying Thy creatures and shutting out the light of Thy countenance from them. Reveal to us Thy glory in Him who is the express image of Thy person. Shew us how in this blessed sacrifice Thy commandment and His obedience perfectly meet and conspire for the redemption of the race whose flesh and blood He took, for whom He poured out his life. Teach us how Thou hast accepted us in Him, how Thou lovest us in Him. Only Thy Spirit, which is His Spirit, can make us know this love

For that we would pray continually in His name and for His sake. Amen.

Life and Death.

I have confessed, O Father, as I have been taught, that Thy Son in dying overcame death, that rising from the dead in Thy glory He brought life and immortality to light. But how little have we, or our fathers, believed this, which we declare to be Thy Gospel! How we have made out of it another Gospel, which is not another, which is news of a curse, not of a blessing, to those whom Christ was not ashamed to call His brothers! We have preached to men of Death, as if it were the great ruler of all, that which they are to fear as the chief instrument of Thy power, as the end of all for which they have striven upon earth; as the entrance into a vague and unknown world which may be one of enjoyment or of torment, according to Thy pleasure, but which is altogether separated from that in which Thou hast placed us here. Hast Thou not put us into a world which is full of life, in which Death is everywhere struggling with Life, and boasting that it prevails? And hast not Thou testified by Thy Son's death and resurrection that this boast is a false one? Hast not Thou declared

that life—the life of plants, the life of animals, the life of man—is mightier than death; that it comes from Christ, that it is preserved in Him, and that what is in Him nothing shall take out of Thy hand? Hast not Thou said that Death is Thy enemy, and that Death shall be destroyed? Alas! O God, we have ceased to declare that news or to believe it. Men have begun to think that death is better than life, better than that eternal life which we have told them is in reserve for a few who have pleased Thee. Their hearts cling to this world, for here there are affections and sympathies; if they lose these they feel as if nothing were left for any one but coldness and isolation, and the fearful vision of an undying self. To this Thy Church has come! Have mercy upon us! Where is that Kingdom of Heaven, that Kingdom of Righteousness, Peace, Joy in the Holy Ghost, which we were told was very nigh to us, which we were invited to enter? Is it, indeed, not nigh, but away in some distant star? Where is that Eternal Life which we are told that Thy Son had manifested; that Life of Love which He had with Thee before the worlds were; that Life which went forth in acts of deliverance and restoration to those bound with plagues and torments when He took flesh and dwelt among

men? We have changed this promise of His for dreams of crowns and garlands, which are to be bestowed on us to distinguish us from the other members of the race which was made in Thy image. But the Life cannot change because we have had vile conceptions of it. Thy Son is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Thou art, and wast, and art to come. Of Thy years there is no end. Wilt Thou not draw us once again into fervent longings for that Life, into loathing of the selfish death from which He has come to set us free? Shall the covetousness which Thou hatest on earth be our preparation for felicity somewhere else? Or shall we believe in Thy Son who gave up Himself, and so enter into the only joy which is possible here or anywhere, the joy of intercourse and communion, the possession of that treasure which thieves cannot steal nor moths corrupt? And if Thou hast sent us forth, O God, as the Apostles said they were sent forth, to testify of Christ's resurrection, help us to testify of it as they did. Help us to tell all men everywhere that Christ died for their sins, and rose again for their justification; that in Him is no sin, but eternal righteousness; that over Him death has no dominion, and, therefore, that we may renounce his dominion over us and over all Thy creation. Hear us, O

Father, who livest with the Son in the Unity of the blessed Spirit, now and throughout all ages. Amen.

The Battle with Evil.

Eternal Father! the recollection how little I have resisted unto blood, striving against sin, how I have acquiesced in the tyranny of the world, how I have accepted the worst crimes of it as inevitable, sometimes overwhelms me. Surely it is Thy Spirit who awakens me to the sense and shame of this indifference. It must be He who teaches me how I have myself been a sharer in these crimes, who brings back to me the evil thoughts which have harboured within me, and which have only been hindered by Thy mercy from breaking forth into acts that men would have abhorred. But it is not Thy Spirit who urges me to make vain and restless efforts that I may compensate my past deeds and omissions; who tells me that trust in Thee is vain, and that we can be only whited sepulchres covering all uncleanness. That is the voice of another spirit, an accuser who would draw me from Thee, who would plunge me into despair and hell. From him I can find no refuge but in the perfect obedience of Thy Son, in His sacrifice for us all. For that atoning

sacrifice I bless Thy holy name. I believe that in Thy Son Thou art satisfied with our race. I believe that Thou hast created us in Him; that Thou lookest upon us as we really are, not as we are made by the unbelief which separates us from Thee and from our brethren, and refuses to recognise our true order and constitution. Thus only do I find the peace which Thy Son left to His disciples. When I present His sacrifice before Thee I can hope that Thou wilt restore all things. I can believe that Thou wilt use each of us in some way to work with Thee in Thy purpose of restoration, blotting out our sins that we may serve Thee with free hearts, Thy free Spirit dwelling and working within us. Amen.

The Spirit of Vanity.

O God, what vanity and self-conceit alternate with these crushing recollections of evil committed, of good left undone! The words that I have spoken and written come back to me as if they were food that could nourish me instead of being empty wind: I dwell on the praises of others, or become bitter against their censures. It seems as if I delighted in myself even when I have perceived myself to be most worthless and loathsome. Gracious Father, does not Thy

blessed Spirit contend in me with this spirit of vanity, who is soon changed into the spirit of despair? Is there not a refuge in Thee from both? If self comes to me when I kneel and pray to Thee, in one form or another, may I not offer the sacrifice of Christ for my brethren? May I not leave all questionings and desires that concern myself, and ask Thee to bless my family, my suffering friends, my nation, the Universal Church, the human race? To Thy righteousness, Thy love alone can I commit these. And so I begin to learn a little of that righteousness and love; I can enter into it because it is the opposite of the unrighteousness and selfishness that is in me. So also I perceive something of what Thy servant meant by the principalities and powers of darkness, the wickedness in high places, with which he said that he as well as his disciples were called to wrestle. Father, I bless Thee that they only become visible to me by Thy light. If there were not a Revelation of Thy eternal life and charity, the mystery of iniquity would not be revealed; we should not know how close the kingdom of hell is to us. Therefore in Thy strength will I hope more for Thy complete victory, for the restoration of Thy whole creation, the more the vision of the Destroyer terrifies me and threatens to tear me for ever from my brethren and from Thee. Glory be to

the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be unto the end. Amen.

Do this in remembrance of Me.

Almighty Father, I cannot remember Thy Son unless Thy Spirit brings Him to my remembrance. Is He not the source of all memory in me? Can I recollect any friend who is upon earth or who is departed, if He does not awaken the recollection? Father of our spirits, if Thou indeed teachest us to remember the Son of Man, shall we not remember in Him all that are with us, and all that are gone out of sight? Have we not lost them because we have lost Him? If we have communion with Him, shall we not also have communion with them? Thou knowest us in Him, if we know not Thee. Thou rememberest us in Him, if we do not remember Thee. But shall we not begin to know as we are known, to remember as we are remembered? Surely, they who remember Thee best will remember Thy children best; surely, those who most remember Christ as their Head, will remember all the members of His body, be they ever so feeble, ever so maimed and diseased. Can it be true, O Father, as some tell us, that He leaves Thy

right hand and comes at the priest's summons to Thy altar when we eat the bread and drink the wine? Do they not remind us that He is ever with Thee, and that He would raise us up to share His glory? Is He not with us all always, not with the few who partake of the symbols of His Presence just at that moment? O that our spirits may ascend with Him, that we may not yield to the desire of the flesh to draw Him down to ourselves! Save and deliver Thy Church, O Lord, from the miserable cravings which divide us from each other, which hinder us from entering into the communion of saints. We dare not reproach our brother for them; they dwell in us all, each of us has yielded to them. But while we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, wilt not Thou break our bands asunder, wilt not Thou enable us to claim the right of worshipping Thee with one heart and one mind in Him who offered the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the whole world? Shall we be separated from each other by bonds of place, or time, or opinion, whilst we remember Him, and in Him glorify Thee who livest and reignest with Him in one spirit through all ages? Amen.

Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no Life in you.

Almighty Father, I believe and confess that Thy Church is perishing, because it rejects this food which our Lord declared to be needful for its existence. We argue about the meaning of the bread and wine which Thou hast given us, how much they convey to us, how we are to receive them; but the flesh and blood of the Son of Man, which were given for the life of this world, do we receive *these?* Do we believe in a Son of Man as the actual Head and Redeemer of Humanity? Do we partake of His Sacrifice? Thou canst enable us to do it: Thou canst bring us to repentance for having turned this feast into a selfish one, which we seek for our comfort, not for Thy Glory. O that the Spirit may come amongst us, and with great might succour us! May He bind us to Christ, the common Lord and Brother! Amen.

That we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

O Father, is it true that those who are sealed with Thy Baptism, those who have in some measure yielded themselves to Thy Spirit, are only the first fruits of Thy Son's Sacrifice, only the earnest of Thy promise that all Thy Creation shall

be restored to its true state in Christ Jesus? I have believed—how faintly, with what reluctance of my flesh Thou knowest—that it must be so; that Thy Son did come upon this earth and die on it, and rise again, that He might regenerate it, and those who dwell upon it. I have believed that Thy Will can subdue the wills which have striven against it, and that the creatures which were subjected to vanity and death not willingly, shall be delivered from their bondage, and shall share in the glorious liberty of the sons of God. If I have deceived myself, do Thou who alone canst scatter the delusion bring me into the Light, for Light only is good. Darkness of any kind must be evil. But if Thou hast, by Thy Light, obliged me, in spite of myself, in spite of a thousand oppositions from the opinions of wise men—from their interpretations of Thy Scriptures—to trust in Thee as the Saviour of all men; then disperse this indifference, this self-indulgence, which cleaves so fast to me. I cannot tell (Thou knowest) how far it is the fear of men, how far it is the love of ease, which makes me so feeble a witness of that which in my inmost heart I confess to be the teaching of Thy Spirit and Thy Church. If it did possess my whole being, could I hold my peace? should I not be declaring everywhere Thy great salvation?

should I not beseech all Thy Ministers to whom Thy people listen, and to whom Thou hast bestowed gifts which I want, not to keep back the message through any dread of its being perverted; not to change it for threats of vengeance against the world; but rather to tremble lest vengeance should overtake the Church for slandering and blaspheming Thee, and refusing to make known Thy glad tidings? O God, teach me how to speak; but keep me for ever dumb rather than suffer me to substitute my notions and arguments for Thy revelation, rather than that I should say, "The Lord saith," when Thou hast not spoken. Thou hast held me back, I think, from denouncing, as I have been often tempted to do, the opinions and beliefs of other men. Thou hast shewn me that my warfare ought to be only with their unbelief; and this was greatest in myself. But if I am hiding in my heart what ought to come forth in burning words, let a coal from Thy altar kindle them. I dread the rhetoric by which men try to influence each other. I dare not pretend to stimulate them when I am cold. But Thy Word may become a fire in us which cannot be quenched. Hear this prayer, O Father, for I believe Thou hast inspired me with it through Thy Son. Amen.

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.

O Father, did Thy Spirit speak to the Churches of Asia in the first century? Is He not speaking to the Churches of Europe in the nineteenth? We should all tremble to say that He is not—all who profess to believe in the Father and the Son. Yet which of us is listening for His voice, which of us heartily believes that He is warning us of evils that we have done and are doing, that He is speaking to us of judgments to come? We wish to save ourselves from the punishments which we suppose are threatening the unbelievers. But that sentence of taking the candlestick away, of leaving us to our own darkness, how little we care for it, how slight it seems in comparison with the material terrors which we use to make our exhortations more effectual! Speak, Lord, once again to us as if we were indeed members of one body, as if our enmities against each other were working our destruction, were making us not blessings but curses to Thy universe. Thou hast set thy Churches to be lights of the world, and we deem it our calling to quench all the light which Thou art anywhere kindling in it, to persuade men that darkness is safer than Light. So men who have glimpses of Truth in any direction respecting outward

and visible things, suppose that our business is to prevent the Truth from being known; so they cry that there will be no honest search among men till they cease to believe in Thee. O God of Light, God of Truth, I feel and confess that without Thee I should care for no light, I should shrink from all Truth as my worst enemy. I believe that whoever has ever seen through the mists which hide any object, whoever has overcome any falsehood, has been under Thy guidance, prompted by Thy Spirit, though he knew it not. Is not Thy Church the appointed witness that it is even so; that all lies come from the Father of Lies, that no lie is of the Truth? When, when shall the Spirit of Truth say this to the Churches? When shall He lead them to Him who is the Way and the Life and the Truth? We try to make up our differences, to find some basis of agreement, and every effort seems to lead us further from Peace—further from Truth. We cannot be at peace till Thou drivest far from us the evil spirits of insincerity and self-seeking that have got possession of us, till Thou bringest us to long for the full revelation of Thy Light when all creation shall behold it and rejoice in it together. O awake as in the ancient days. Make us to know that Thou art the same from generation to generation, and that Thou hast promised that we shall grow from

generation to generation in the knowledge and love of Thee. Amen.

Rewards and Punishments.

Almighty Father! I bless Thee that Thou rewardest those who seek Thee by enabling them to find Thee. I bless Thee that Thou settest before all men the infinite reward of knowing Thy righteousness, Thy love, Thy truth, and of having these for their substantial eternal dwelling-place. I bless Thee that Thou punishest us continually for the selfishness which keeps us from Thee, for the unrighteousness, malice, falsehood, which are the enemies that hold us in chains, to abide in which is to be in the torments of hell. O Father! teach us more and more of *these* rewards and *these* punishments. Enable us daily to thank Thee for both, to discern the same meaning and purpose in both—to perceive how Thou dost adapt them to the different needs and circumstances of Thy creatures. But we Thy teachers and preachers have led men to think that Thou offerest them prizes for goodness which are more desirable than goodness itself, and punishments for evil which are more to be dreaded than evil. We have turned both Thy rewards and Thy punishments into encouragements of self-seeking; we have used

them equally against Thee. Father! we know that if we seek first Thy kingdom and righteousness, Thou wilt give us what is good for our souls and bodies; Thou wilt open our senses to perceive and enjoy the things which Thou hast created us to perceive and enjoy. We know also that Thou wilt rather cut off our right hands, and put out our right eyes, than that they should draw us into the loss of Thy love. Awaken us all out of the longing for selfish prizes which would destroy us, out of the dread of a misery which may be for our greatest good. Make us to hunger and thirst after Thy righteousness, with which Thou promisest that we shall be filled. Make us to tremble at the thought of being filled with our own devices, of being left to the hell into which we are sinking whenever we become our own objects, when we worship ourselves instead of Thee. Hear us, O Father! in His Name who gave up Himself for us all, and who liveth for ever with Thee in the unity of the Spirit, our God evermore. Amen.

THE END.

PRINTED BY VIRTUE AND CO., CITY ROAD, LONDON.

00111233

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018